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Teacher's joy at meeting the Pope

Mary Beatham meets Pope Francis

A FORMER school teacher from West Lancashire was among a group invited to meet the Pope as recognition of their work with disabled children.

Mary Beatham, from Parbold, attended a global conference in Rome about best practices for helping people with disabilities to fully engage in the life of the church.

Formerly head of Religious Education at schools in Preston and Chorley, the 58-year-old now works as a catechist (religious teacher) for Nugent Care, with special responsibility for helping children and adults with learning and other disabilities to play a fuller part in church life.

And after the conference she was delighted to be invited, along with other attendees, to meet Pope Francis in the Vatican.

She said: "We were taken to the Pope's offices where he spoke at length about what we were doing and how important people with disabilities are, what they can teach us and what they can do for us.

"We were then invited to go and shake hands with him and speak to him. I introduced myself as a catechist and thanked him for what he had said about our work.

"Although it was very brief it was a wonderful, joyful experience. We were all just so elated afterwards - it was just brilliant."

CHRISTMAS COMES EARLY FOR KIRSTY

Disabled teenager set to enjoy a taste of independence after wheelchair appeal success

Report by **Kenny Parke**

CHRISTMAS has come early for disabled teenager Kirsty Ankers after she finally received an electric wheelchair to help her get out and about independently following an appeal in the Champion.

The 13-year-old from Burscough was featured on our front page in November when her mum Helen told of her fight to secure the right care and support for the youngster who suffers from Weaver Syndrome.

The rare condition causes abnormal growth in Kirsty's bones and affects her joints. As a result she has great difficulty walking and isn't able to go anywhere without assistance.

The teenager, who is also autistic, is already 6ft 1 inch tall AND suffers from migraines which can leave her paralysed.

However, like most fun-loving 13-year-olds she also enjoys pop music, make-up, and shopping - as well as hanging out with her older sisters.

Mum, Helen, contacted the Champion to tell of the difficulties she had experienced trying to access various services for Kirsty and also about her determination to raise the £1,800 needed for a Kymco K Activ wheelchair after being refused an NHS-funded one.

She had already raised around half of the money thanks to help from family, friends, former colleagues and members of the Burscough community, including new youth group Youth of Burscough.

And following her appeal in the Champion two local charities - Douglas Valley Lions and the Southport-based Community Link Foundation - stepped in to generously supply the rest.

Helen says that Kirsty is over the moon to have her own powered wheelchair and the chance for some independence.

"She would like to say 'thank-you' to everyone and couldn't wait to use it. Her first trip out in it will be with the family to the National Trust property, Tatton Park, in Cheshire.

"I would also like to say a massive thanks to everyone who made a donation and all those people who have supported and shared Kirsty's story.

"It truly has been a complete joy to see family, friends and community come together to help Kirsty - I can't thank them enough."

Kirsty tries out her new 'wheels' with mum Helen (left)and sister Shelby (right). Also pictured are Harry Johnson, Brian Thomas and John Tamlin from Douglas Valley Lions, Dave Duffy from the Community Link Foundation and Peter Cousins and Carole Bennett from Skelmersdale's Brighter Futures Workshops which supplied the chair.

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Trust recognised for employment opportunity equality

LANCASHIRE Care NHS Foundation Trust has been listed as a Disability Confident Employer for its work in increasing understanding and challenging attitudes towards disability.

This recognises the trust's efforts in going the extra mile to ensure that people living with disabilities or long-term health conditions get a fair chance in seeking employment by helping to positively change attitudes, behaviours and cultures towards disability.

Joanna Harrison *(pictured, right)*, equality and diversity facilitator at the trust, said: "We are extremely pleased that the trust continues to be recognised as an organisation that proactively recruits and retains employees with disabilities.

"All employees are highly valued but we know there to be additional benefits of employing people with disabilities, hidden disabilities and long-term health conditions."

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Tips for diabetics on how to enjoy a hearty *and* healthy Christmas

Report by **Henry James**

HEALTH professionals from Lancashire Care NHS Foundation Trust have drawn up a list of suggestions aimed at helping people living with diabetes to enjoy all the festivities over the Christmas and New Year period while still being mindful of the condition.

Heather Platt from the trust's Diabetes Education Service said: "Christmas and New Year is a time when we often eat and drink very differently, with parties and celebration meals. However, it's important to make sure people living with diabetes know which sensible measures to take during this time of the year to stay healthy and fit.

"With this in mind, the trust's diabetes service has come up with the following suggestions to help people with diabetes over the festive period."

- Stock up on your prescription items such as insulin, test strips and tablets etc. Your doctor's surgery may only be closed for a few days, but don't leave yourself with only a limited stock.
- Don't forget the basics. Keep in mind the principles of controlling your blood sugar levels. Remember to take your diabetes medication on time or balance your insulin with your food choices. Testing your blood glucose level more often will help you to keep better control.
- Not all meals need to be unhealthy. Fill up on vegetables with your Christmas dinner, eat smaller portions of high-fat foods and stick to one portion of pudding.
- Get out and enjoy the outdoors. Have a boogie with the kids or give the dog an extra walk.
- Drink plenty of water to keep hydrated, particularly if you are eating sweet foods.

More information and recipes for Christmas meals can be found on the Diabetes UK website at www.diabetes.org.uk.

If you have not already had your flu vaccination contact your GP.

If you need advice about any of the above or to talk to someone, contact your local team responsible for your care or check out the Christmas advice on any good diabetes website.

CCG Primary Care Committee meeting

THE NHS West Lancashire Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), will be holding their next Primary Care Committee meeting in public on Tuesday, January 9.

This will be in the boardroom of the CCG offices in Hilldale on the Ormskirk Hospital site and is scheduled to run from 1.30 to 3pm.

Steve Gross, board lay member at NHS West Lancashire CCG and chair of the new primary care committee, said: "As a group of local commissioners and clinicians, we understand what issues face our local communities, and importantly what needs our local people have. These new committee meetings are held in public, so anyone can observe them, which further reflects our commitment to be transparent about our plans and decisions."

For instructions on how to find the office, contact the CCG by ringing 01695 588 000. The agenda for the meeting will be made available on the CCG's website a week before the meeting.

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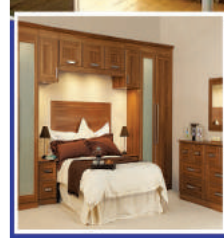

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An artist's impression of what the proposed development on the former Westlec House site is likely to look like.

Green light for 'landmark' development on former council office base site

WEST Lancs Council has made a landmark decision to approve a scheme that will see the authority build houses specifically to be sold for the first time.

The project to build 27 new homes on the former Westec House site, close to the council offices in Derby Street, in the heart of Ormskirk, was agreed at the council meeting on Wednesday, December 13.

The site was formerly occupied by Westec House, a council office base which was demolished in 2014.

With planning permission already granted for the development and a preferred contractor established, the council hopes to confirm a start date for the construction shortly.

And the authority hopes to have more exciting projects in the future as it is looking to form a new development company to help it achieve its ambitions for development across the borough.

Of the 27 homes that are to be built on the former Westec House site, 18 will be houses to be put on the open market for sale.

'Exciting'

These will comprise three two-bedroom terraced houses; eight two-bedroom semi-detached houses; six three-bedroom semi-detached houses and one three-bedroom detached house. Another two-bedroom terraced house will be available for shared ownership.

The other eight homes will be one-bedroom apartments to be retained by the council and rented on an affordable basis.

The project will be funded from a combination of sources, including prudent borrowing and the Housing Revenue Account.

Council leader, Councillor Ian Moran, said; "This is a really exciting project for the borough that will realise the potential for this site with the building of new homes.

"As well as providing 27 new homes, the scheme will have an extra benefit of bringing in much-needed funds for the council.

"Like many other authorities across the country, we are facing difficult financial challenges, and also have to become self-financing by 2020.

"The funds raised from the sale of homes will go towards supporting the council's capital programme and helping to meet our priorities."

Police issue image of possible suspect after string of indecent exposure incidents in town

POLICE officers investigating a number of reports of a man exposing himself to women in Ormskirk have released a composite image of a man they would like to speak to.

On Wednesday, December 6 a woman walking down Burscough Street was followed by a man who had his genitals exposed. She described the man as being aged between 30 and 40, around 6ft, and wearing black clothes and a black jacket.

The same day a woman walking in Wigan Road spotted a lone man sitting in a small black car performing a sex act, while members of the public walked past. She described the man as being white, with strawberry-blond hair and wearing a black T-shirt.

A third woman also reported seeing a man performing a sex act in a car in Wigan Road on Monday, November 6.

Meanwhile on Monday, December 4 a woman walking in Derby Street at about 9.10pm saw a man wearing a purple hoody performing a sex act behind a mesh fence.

And in an incident on Thursday, August 17, a student walking to Edge Hill University along Ruff Lane saw a man sitting in the driver's seat of a car performing a sex act.

Officers believe some of the offences may have been committed by the same man and would like any information which may help to identify him.

In particular, they are seeking information about a small black car, possibly a Vauxhall Corsa with the registration PF0 or PF04, which was seen in the area at the time of some of the offences.

Sergeant Craig Appleton, of Lancashire Constabulary's South Division, said: "These crimes are of a worrying nature with a repeat pattern of behaviour that is suspected to have been committed by the same man.

"We have pursued a number of lines of enquiry but have not yet identified this male.

"We are appealing for any information from the public which could lead to the identity of this offender.

"In the meantime officers are showing an increased presence in the area at the times and locations where the offences have occurred. If a member of the public sees an offence of this nature occurring call 999 ".

Anyone with information can call Ormskirk Police on 01695 566444 quoting ref LC-20171206-1438 or they can email craig.appleton@lancashire.pnn.police.uk or email dave.rigby@lancashire.pnn.police.uk.

Call for Government to fund pay deal for local authority staff

WEST Lancs Council chiefs have welcomed the discussions about increasing pay for local government staff - but are calling on the Government to ensure it funds the extra expense it will create for all authorities.

At the start of this month the National Employers for Local Government Services (NELGS) made an offer of a two-year pay deal to council staff.

The offer covers the two years from April 1, 2018, and would mean a 2% wage rise next April for the majority of council staff and a further 2% in April 2019, with higher increases for lower paid staff.

Fallen

The offers are being discussed by unions, who earlier this year asked for a 5% pay rise for local government staff.

In October this year West Lancs Council agreed a motion which noted that National Joint Council (NJC) basic pay has fallen by 21% since 2010 in real terms. NJC workers had a three-year pay freeze from 2010-2012 and NJC pay is the lowest in the public sector.

Councillor Ian Moran

The motion also stated that the council:

- **Supports the NJC pay claim for 2018, submitted by UNISON, GMB and Unite on behalf of council and school workers and calls for the immediate end of public sector pay restraint. NJC pay cannot be allowed to fall further behind other parts of the public sector.**
- **Welcomes the joint review of the NJC pay spine to remedy the turbulence caused by bottom-loaded pay settlements.**
- **Notes the drastic ongoing cuts to local government funding and calls on the Government to provide additional funding to fund a decent pay rise for NJC employees and the pay spine review.**

West Lancs Council leader, Councillor Ian Moran, said: "West Lancashire Borough Council is always striving to be a good employer and welcomes discussions on improving pay for staff. But like other local authorities across the country we are facing ongoing reductions in government grant funding and other income. Therefore we are asking the Government to make sure it funds the extra cost of this pay rise."

Charity says 'thank you' and goodbye - for now!

OFFICIALS of a leading cancer charity have issued a huge 'thank-you' to the people of Ormskirk for supporting their shop in the town centre for more than 25 years as they prepare to close its doors for the final time just two days before Christmas.

The Cancer Research charity shop in Aughton Street is set to close on Saturday, December 23.

And although the charity is hoping to eventually open another shop in the town, at present it has been unable to secure suitable premises.

Since it opened in October 1991 the Aughton Street site has raised more than £2.3 million for Cancer Research UK's life-saving work.

And officials of the charity have praised the generosity of the many customers who have donated goods or purchased items over the years, and the dedicated team of staff and volunteers whose efforts have helped to make the shop such a success.

Area manager, Sarah Loughran, said: "We are very sad to close the Cancer Research UK shop in Aughton Street, Ormskirk, due to redevelopment plans.

"However, I would like to say a huge thank-you to the team of staff and volunteers who have given their time over the years and have done a fantastic job.

"We are actively looking for new premises in Ormskirk, but there is nothing suitable at the moment. Staff and volunteers have been made aware of the closure and the last day of trade is December 23."

Meanwhile loyal customers who still want to support Cancer Research UK are being encouraged to visit the charity's stores in nearby Southport and Formby.

Manager Suzy Duke outside the Aughton Street Cancer Research UK charity shop.

Sarah added: "We're very grateful for the support of the Ormskirk community over the years and we hope they'll continue to support our work.

"Cancer Research UK receives no Government funding for our life-saving research and so we rely on the people who support us by shopping with us, making a donation or generously offering their time."

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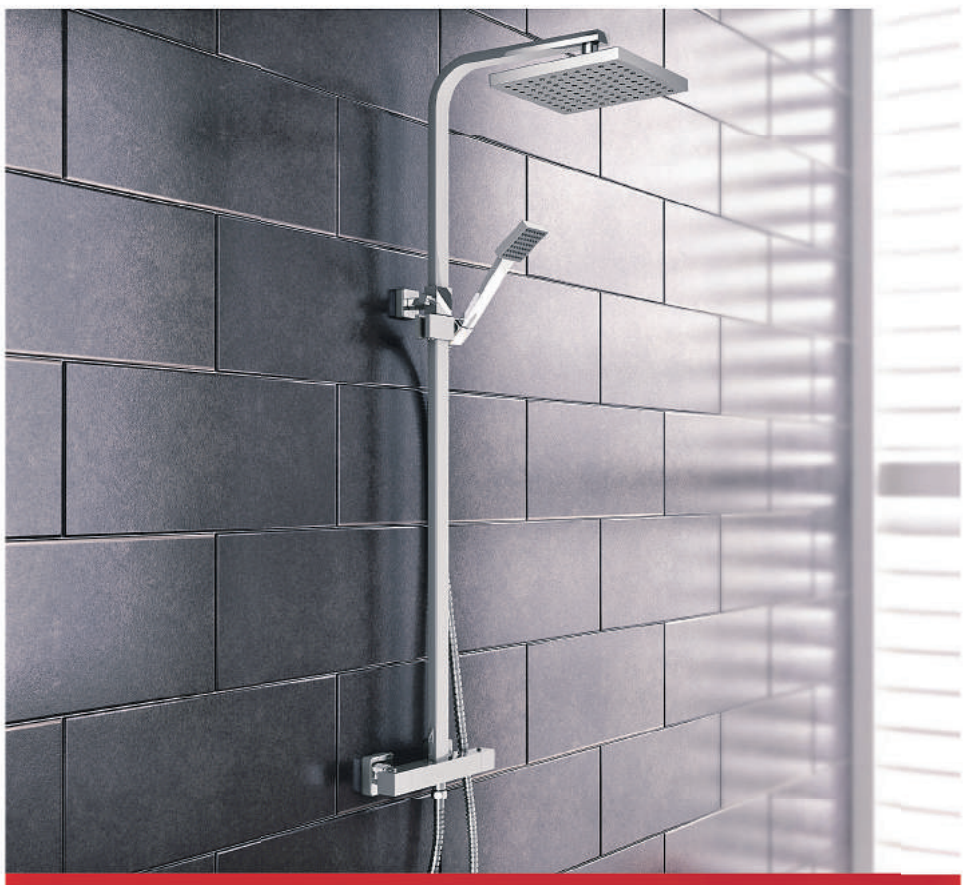

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Elizabeth's sponsorship helps support Egyptian youngster to a better life and brighter future

A MENTAL health nurse from Parbold has made her third trip to see a teenage girl she sponsors in Cairo through global children's charity Plan International UK.

Elizabeth Stringman first visited 12-year-old Sarah two years ago, two years after she started sponsoring her.

She chose to sponsor a child in Cairo because she has spent time over the past few years in the Egyptian capital working at a refugee school and knew she wanted to visit her sponsored child one day.

The 48-year-old said: "I had no idea how much joy sponsorship would bring to my life. I love sending and receiving letters from Sarah, and by going out to visit her it really completes the experience.

"I was shocked when I first visited Sarah in her community. There were no proper roads, only some dirt tracks, and there were hardly any cars just donkeys and carts.

"The building where she lives looked like a derelict warehouse, with no main entrance door to the building and therefore no security. The ground floor of the building was sand and rubble.

"However, on my return visits there have been many improvements and the building is more secure and safe. I'm so pleased by the progress of Sarah's living conditions.

"On visiting Sarah's community I quickly learned that one of the biggest challenges facing girls across Egypt is female genital mutilation (FGM).

FGM is a traditional custom that, although now banned by the Egyptian law, still affects more than 14 per cent of girls in the country under the age of 14. The issue is a significant taboo in Egyptian society, and girls and women are often unable to meet to discuss it in a safe environment.

Sarah with Elizabeth on her latest visit. Photo by Elizabeth Stringman

Thanks to Plan International's Safer Cities project, last year nearly 900 girls in Cairo were given somewhere they could go to discuss issues affecting them, as well as learning how to be ambassadors to promote the safety and security of girls in their neighborhoods.

Elizabeth said: "It's always lovely to see Sarah and her mother. Sarah's father passed away in 2015 and that had a huge impact on the family. I was worried about how Sarah would cope but was relieved to know Plan International was there to support her and her family.

"It's been wonderful watching Sarah grow and develop into a confident, happy, healthy woman who aspires to go to university. The charity has done a great job developing projects in the community that help girls feel empowered, and help them realise they have options other than early marriage", Elizabeth said.

Plan International UK is celebrating its 80th birthday this year. It was set up by a British journalist, John Langdon Davies, who was moved by the suffering of orphaned children he saw while reporting on the Spanish Civil War. Over the past eight decades, the charity has grown to support children in more than 51 countries, and more than 86,000 people in the UK now sponsor a child.

Money donated through child sponsorship benefits children and their families by helping to provide clean water, healthcare and education in communities across Africa, Asia and Latin America.

Sponsors receive regular updates and photographs from their sponsored child and keep in touch by writing letters back.

Elizabeth said: "Every time I visit Sarah, I see that she's getting a good education and that makes me happy."

Author aims to help children cope with parting from foster siblings

by **Danielle Thompson**

AN author from West Lancashire who has had two adventure fantasy novels published has turned her hand to a subject that is close to her heart for her latest book.

As a foster mum herself, Jemma Roche-Walker knows only too well the difficulty of explaining to young children what is happening when a foster sibling leaves the family, possibly for good.

Now she hopes her latest book, *Goodbye, Hello*, will help explain the process in a way that youngsters will be able to grasp. The busy 31-year-old, who also works part-time as a carer for adults with additional needs, says the the book is now available on Amazon and Kindle.

Jemma Roche-Walker with a copy of her new book *Goodbye, Hello*

Transition

Jemma, who lives in Burscough with her partner and four children, says that *Goodbye, Hello* is aimed at the biological children of foster carers, aged eight and younger, to help them to understand that their foster siblings may not be in their lives very long and to understand that after they leave, they may not get to see them again.

She said: "The book is aimed to help birth children of foster carers in order to help them cope with the transition of the children being adopted.

"It's been a long time coming but I'm thrilled with the book and especially the illustrations by Katherine Gilmartin.

"When our last foster child left our daughter really struggled to understand what was happening. She was confused and very upset that she wouldn't see them again.

"I hope that this book, which made it clearer for her, will help the children of other foster carers to understand too.

"I hope it will explain the process of adoption to them so they understand properly."

Members of the Ormskirk District Scouts pictured at their carol service in Coronation Park.

Mayor and president join scouts for carols in the park

THE president of West Lancashire Scouts, Gail Stanley and Mayor of West Lancs, Councillor Neil Furey joined Scouts from across the borough at a carol service in Ormskirk's Coronation Park.

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More strike misery for rail travellers

RAIL travellers are set for more misery on Friday (December 22) when staff at Merseyrail stage their latest 24-hour stoppage in the ongoing dispute over driver-only trains.

A reduced service will run across the Merseyrail network between the hours of 7am and 7pm.

There will be no service on the Ormskirk-Maghull line and trains will not be calling at Freshfield, Hall Road, Bootle Oriel Road, Bank Hall and Sandhills stations.

A planned strike by Arriva Bus drivers on the same day has been cancelled after a pay dispute was resolved and Arriva have agreed to accept Merseyrail tickets on the day for bus journeys covering Merseyrail's Northern and Wirral lines.

However, to prevent overcrowding on buses at peak times, Merseyrail tickets will not be accepted between 7 and 9am and 4 and 6pm.

Merseyrail managing director, Andy Heath, said: "Apologies to our customers who are being inconvenienced at one of the busiest times of the year. This latest strike, taking place on the last Friday before Christmas, will target people out doing their last-minute Christmas shopping, having fun with friends at festive events and many commuters on their final day in work before the holiday starts.

"I promise that my team and I will do all we can to keep disruption to your festive plans to an absolute minimum and endeavour to provide as many trains as we possibly can in these difficult circumstances."

Maharishi School celebrates glowing Ofsted report

Report by **Henry James**

STAFF, pupils and parents at West Lancashire's Maharishi Free School are celebrating after the school was judged 'outstanding' for Personal Development, Behaviour and Welfare following an inspection by schools watchdog, Ofsted.

This inspection category included the school's use of Transcendental Meditation (TM) and the other aspects of its unique system of consciousness-based education.

The school said its techniques are shown to have a "beneficial impact" on children's confidence, social integration and behaviour, as well as academic performance.

Inspectors rated all other aspects as good and continue to rate the school as good overall, finding "pupils are very well prepared for their next stages in education" and "are happy and content."

The report showed that the level of pupil progress and nurturing was available in both the primary and secondary phases, as the Maharishi School is a through school.

The primary school is based in Lathom and the secondary site is in Skelmersdale.

A spokesman for the school said: "This is another unusual feature of the school, and means that primary pupils can move straight up into the secondary phase without having to re-apply.

"The school is popular and always encourages families interested in the secondary phase - which offers a very academic curriculum - to apply for the primary phase which will give the best chance of getting a secondary place."

Maharishi School principal Lisa Edwards (centre) with some of the staff and pupils celebrating their Ofsted report.

The school said the Ofsted report was a "personal triumph" for headteacher, Mrs Edwards, who only started at Maharishi in September 2016. The inspectors made particular reference to the "outstanding contribution" she had made to the school.

A spokesman for the school commented: "Under her excellent leadership, building on the firm foundations of consciousness-based education laid by the previous head, Dr Cassells, the inspectors noted that all the staff contributed to this success by ensuring that pupils made progress on all fronts, including improving their academic outcomes."

The report also looked at Maharishi School's Year 6 achieving 'fantastic' SATS results last summer. With an 83% pass rate in maths, reading and SPaG (spelling, punctuation and grammar), the results were well above the national average.

The combined RWM (reading, writing and maths) score was 6% above the national average as well.

All national pass rates had improved on last year.

The spokesman added: "Congratulations to the Year 6 teacher Mrs Gaskell, her assistant Ms Irving and of course the class!

"This success was achieved without undue pressure, without sacrificing other aspects of the curriculum and without spoiling the children's enjoyment of being at school.

"A big part of this is the school's use of meditation. Scientific research shows that TM improves intelligence and creativity, as well as producing more happiness and harmony for those using this simple, mental technique.

"Congratulations to all the staff and pupils on a fantastic outcome and a great way to finish 2017."

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County cuts to street lights maintenance schedule putting safety at risk - claim

Report by **Henry James**

ANGRY Labour councillors have accused the Conservative-led administration at Lancashire County Council of putting safety at risk by cutting the routine maintenance and testing cycle of street lighting by 50 per cent right across the county.

At the county council's cabinet meeting on December 7 it was decided to stop all night-time inspections of street lighting, and inspection will now only take place during the day.

And Councillor John Fillis, who represents Sklelmersdale East on the county authority, says the decision undermines the council's claim to be spending more on the county's roads.

Cllr. Fillis, deputy leader of the Labour group on the county council, said: "The Conservatives claim they are spending more money on the roads, but the reality is they are cutting road safety and endangering local people.

Councillor John Fillis

"We are only six months into the Conservative administration and they have already cut the highways budget by £2.661 million and they still have to find over £60 million more this year, due to their government's austerity.

"This is a completely false economy. Everyone knows that if you do not maintain equipment properly, not only will it break down more often, but the cost of repairing it goes up, resulting in more and more street lights being shut down permanently as the funding will not be there to repair them.

"This would be in keeping with the Conservative previous budget proposal to remove one in three street lights. They recognise that this will result in more complaints but like the cut in the renewal of white lines, they don't seem to care. The risk to the public is not recognised within their administration.

"The loss of lighting will not only affect road safety, it will also create a sense of unease among many members of the community, epecially the elderly and parents who worry about their children being out after dark."

Lancashire County Council has been contacted for comment.

Youth club chief executive graduates from bank's social entrepreneurs programme

Report by **Kenny Parke**

A WOMAN from Ormskirk who runs a club for disadvantaged children and young people aged eight to 25, has graduated from the Lloyds Bank Social Entrepreneurs Programme.

Jeane Rogers is the chief executive officer of the Centre 63 Youth Club in Kirkby which focuses on giving young people in Knowsley a safe and friendly environment to socialise with their peers, develop social skills and community awareness and participate in positive projects and activities, including a chance to take part in new activities and experiences.

Jeane Lowe

The centre also runs sexual health workshops, drugs awareness workshops and various music workshops from recording to learning to play an instrument, along with multi-media and music sessions.

Run in partnership with School for Social Entrepreneurs and jointly funded by Big Lottery Fund, the year-long programme Lloyds Bank Social Entrepreneurs Programme equips participants with the skills to grow a social business to help solve some of the most pressing social issues within their communities.

The entrepreneurs on the Start Up and Scale Up programmes each receive financial support (grants of up to £10,000), a comprehensive learning programme with School for Social Entrepreneurs and a Lloyds Banking Group business mentor.

A new match funding model has been introduced this year as an incentive to social entrepreneurs to grow their business through trading to become more sustainable. The funding model empowers social entrepreneurs to double their income through trading (up to the amount of match trading grant on offer).

Jeane, who has graduated from the Scale Up North West 2016 programme, said: "Centre 63 is the first choice for informal and community education in Kirkby and the wider borough of Knowsley. By participating on the Lloyds Bank Social Entrepreneurs Programme, in partnership with School for Social Entrepreneurs, the centre has been able to generate further income by employing a business development intern to support fundraising and help us to develop business links.

"It has been a fantastic opportunity to network with others on the programme and my business mentor from Lloyds Banking Group has been a useful source of guidance and support."

Charity's appeal on behalf of homeless

CHARITY Shelter has launched a Christmas appeal after a new report revealed that almost 2,700 children in the North West will wake up homeless and in temporary accommodation on Christmas Day.

With at least seven families becoming homeless every day in the North West, the charity is calling on the public to support its urgent Christmas appeal.

John Ryan, Shelter's Manchester hub manager, said: "It's a national scandal that the number of homeless children in Britain has risen every year for the last decade. No child should have to spend Christmas without a home. That's why our frontline advisers will continue to work tirelessly to help more families fighting homelessness. But we can't do this alone.

"We're asking people to help a homeless family and make giving to Shelter their new Christmas tradition."

To support the appeal visit www.shelter.org.uk or text SHELTER to 70080 to donate £3.

Deputy Mayor and Mayoress of West Lancs, Councillor Noel Delaney and Ann Stubbert and Mayor and Mayoress of Sefton, Councillor David and Mrs Wendy Robinson joined with residents from Athena Healthcare Group care homes for a Christmas bash at the Royal Clifton Hotel, Southport. Also pictured is organiser, Lesley Malone (2nd right).

Care homes team up for festive fun day at resort

RESIDENTS and staff of care homes from across West Lancashire and Sefton joined together with civic dignitaries from both boroughs for a festive afternoon at the Royal Clifton Hotel in Southport

Members of the Athena Healthcare Group's Community Activity Hub, launched earlier this year, attended the event along with family and friends and were treated to a welcome drink and a show telling the life story of forces' sweetheart Vera Lynn, courtesy of the hotel management.

Lesley Malone, events ambassador for Athena Healthcare, which has homes in Ormskirk and Burscough as well as Southport and Formby, said: "This was a perfect example of care homes working together in a positive way. This was also a first in the caring sector where staff and management at homes from other boroughs joined together with residents, their families and friends and dignitaries for a get-together."

Steven Grant, chief executive for the Best Western Royal Clifton, said: "We are supporting Athena Healthcare Group's Community Activity Hub and are more than happy to help to welcome this great initiative."

Special guests for the occasion were Deputy Mayor and Mayoress of West Lancashire, Councillor Noel Delaney and Ann Stubbert, along with Mayor and Mayoress of Sefton, Councillor David and Mrs Wendy Robinson.

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Post Office outreach service launched in Haskayne

THE Post Office has restored services to Haskayne with the introduction of a new Hosted Outreach Service at Haskayne Village Hall in School Lane.

The Postmaster from Burscough Bridge Post Office will operate the new Hosted Outreach Service which launched on Monday (December 11) and will visit every Monday between 1.15 and 3.15pm.

A wide range of services are available at the new outlet.

Customers can collect benefits in cash using everyday banking services or a Post Office card account.

Lesley McNally, network operations area manager, said: "We are confident that this new Hosted Outreach service will meet customer needs."

Be wary about where you buy food from

Council warns public to steer clear of unregistered businesses

WEST Lancs Council is warning residents to make sure any Christmas treats and other food they buy is purchased from a business registered to sell food - even if it is a small operation they see on social media.

The council wants people to be careful as it is aware of a trend in small food operators increasingly advertising their services on Facebook and other social media.

A number of these are selling Christmas cakes and other festive party food.

Councillor Kevin Wright, West Lancs Council's portfolio holder for health and community safety, said: "Any person or business that sells food to the public on a regular basis must be registered with the council, even if they are an individual making food in their kitchen at home to sell. This is so they can be checked to make sure they are complying with food hygiene regulations and, where appropriate, given a food hygiene rating.

Councillor Kevin Wright

"Whilst we would advise residents to check if any food business is registered for their own peace of mind, the council wants to support legitimate local business and I would strongly recommend anyone thinking of operating a food business to contact the council's food safety team for advice."

People can check if a business they buy food from is registered and inspected by visiting the Food Standards Agency National Food Hygiene Ratings website at www.food.gov.uk/ratings.

Anyone selling food to the public should register with the council 28 days before they open for business. More information can be found on the council's website at www.west-lancs.gov.uk/foodsafety.

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Happy ending for puppy left for dead by the roadside last Christmas

Report by **Henry James**

A BLEEDING and seriously ill puppy saved from death in Appley Bridge by a kind-hearted passer-by at Christmas last year has found her happy ending.

Bella was just three months old when she was spotted in the dark by a group of three people travelling in a taxi home after a night out in Wigan.

After asking the taxi driver to pull over they beckoned the frightened pup over to them and realised she was bleeding and needed urgent help so they called the RSPCA.

Unfortunately, the taxi driver wouldn't let Bella - as they named her - travel in his cab to a vets so they knocked door-to-door at nearby houses, asking for blankets and towels to keep her warm and dry until the inspector arrived.

It was discovered that Bella was suffering from a prolapse, which, if left untreated, could have killed her. Luckily, she was taken to the RSPCA's Greater Manchester Hospital where she got the care she needed and now she is facing a very different Christmas in a new home with owner Donna Parkinson.

Donna said: "When I lost my Doberman I was absolutely miserable and with all these dogs needing homes it just made sense to me to adopt. I don't think there could have been a better match - I needed Bella as much as she needed me."

Bella was rescued on Appley Road South, at around 10pm on Tuesday, December 27, 2016. RSPCA inspector Alison Fletcher, who was called out to Bella, said: "The kindness of the three strangers who helped Bella that night no doubt saved her life.

"She had a prolapse which had been left untreated for some time and was underweight. I suspect she had probably been abandoned on the roadside not long before she was found, probably because of the state she was in.

"As the taxi wouldn't take her to a local vets two of the rescuers stayed with her and the third went home to call us. Unfortunately I was 30 minutes away so they started knocking on the doors of nearby houses and were taken in by a caring couple who provided blankets and towels for her and kept her warm and comfortable until I got there."

After her operation, Bella was cared for by one of RSPCA's dedicated fosterers until she was adopted by Donna who said: "They couldn't have done a better job with her. She makes friends everywhere she goes.

"Everyone thinks their dog is special but she's amazing. She's got bags of character, is so playful and so much fun."

Happy in her new home - Bella

Artist is runner-up in top competition

AN artist from Aughton was selected from more than 100 amateur and professional competitors to reach the finals of this year's Lancashire Life Landscape Artist of the year awards 2017.

Watercolour artist Michael Treanor's painting of Ruff Woods in Ormskirk was runner-up in the competition and he went on to be chosen as Artist of the Month for the November edition of Lancashire Life.

Self-taught Michael, who works from a studio in Long Lane, was praised by judges for his mastery of watercolour techniques describing his entry as a "well thought-out composition."

He said: "I was extremely delighted and very proud to be selected as a finalist with my painting of Ruff Woods Ormskirk and to be subsequently featured as Artist of the Month in Lancashire Life was a great personal achievement."

Amy (left) and friends at a charity fundraising event held at Maghull's Royal British Legion.

Nursery owner Amy's helping hand for family of youngster recovering from brain tumour

Report by **Kenny Parker**

A YOUNG family from Lydiate whose one-year-old son is receiving treatment following the removal of a brain tumour, have been given a helping hand from the owner of the young boy's nursery.

Max Johnson was only 11 months old when doctors at Alder Hey Children's Hospital gave his parents the devastating news that he had an ependymoma, a tumour arising from the central nervous system.

Within days, however, he was receiving life saving surgery to have the growth removed.

Thankfully, the operation was successful and all of the tumour was removed - but Max's family was told that his recovery would take some time.

To help the family through the difficult time Amy Warnick, kind hearted friend and owner of the nursery Max was attending, Little Buds, based at Lydiate Primary School, has been raising money so that his self-employed mother, Keira, and dad Tony, did not need to worry about money on top of everything else.

Amy, 37, and from Aughton, has set up a Just Giving fundraising page and recently held a family fun event at the Royal British Legion in Maghull to raise cash.

From the event she raised £3,500 and in total she has now raised £5,330.

Amy said: "I decided to begin fundraising to support the family so that while they are looking after their son Max through these tough times, and during his recovery, they don't have to worry about finances.

"Max's mum, Keira, is self employed as a beautician and obviously her loss of income will put added worry on the family, so the money raised will help the family and allow them to fully concentrate on getting Max better."

Since the operation, Max who recently had his first birthday and who has an older brother and sister, Jamie and Maizie, has had a gruelling few months, with visits to and from hospital and the operating theatre, but his family say he continues to fight and is always smiling.

He was being fed by a tube but this has been removed in the last few weeks. He has also started a course of chemotherapy treatment.

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Minister announces £5.6m funding boost for region's roads

Money will help to fill in potholes across the borough

Report by **Tom Martin**

POTHOLES in West Lancashire could be repaired under plans to spend more than £5.6million on improvements to roads across the North West.

The Government announced plans on Thursday, December 14 to spend a total of £46m on upgrading the standards of roads throughout the country - enough it's calculated to repair almost 868,000 potholes!

Of this total, around £5,635,000 is earmarked for the North West region or enough to fix more than 106,300 potholes at an estimated cost of £53 each.

Innovations

Transport Minister Jesse Norman revealed that £200m will be spent in total on general road improvements, including more highways maintenance, new technologies developed to improve highways resilience and high-quality cycle parks.

Transport Minister says new Goverment cash for the region's roads will help to repair potholes across the borough

The minister said: "People need great roads to get about, do business and see friends and family.

"We're investing record amounts at present to improve the condition of our roads, so drivers and cyclists don't have to dodge potholes to travel safely.

"We're also looking at how new innovations can help councils keep their roads in the best condition, saving money and planning their maintenance better."

The latest funding is in addition to the £75m in awards from the Pothole Action Fund already given to local authorities to date this year.

The £250m Pothole Action Fund was announced in the 2016 Budget with the aim of fixing more than four million potholes by 2020/21.

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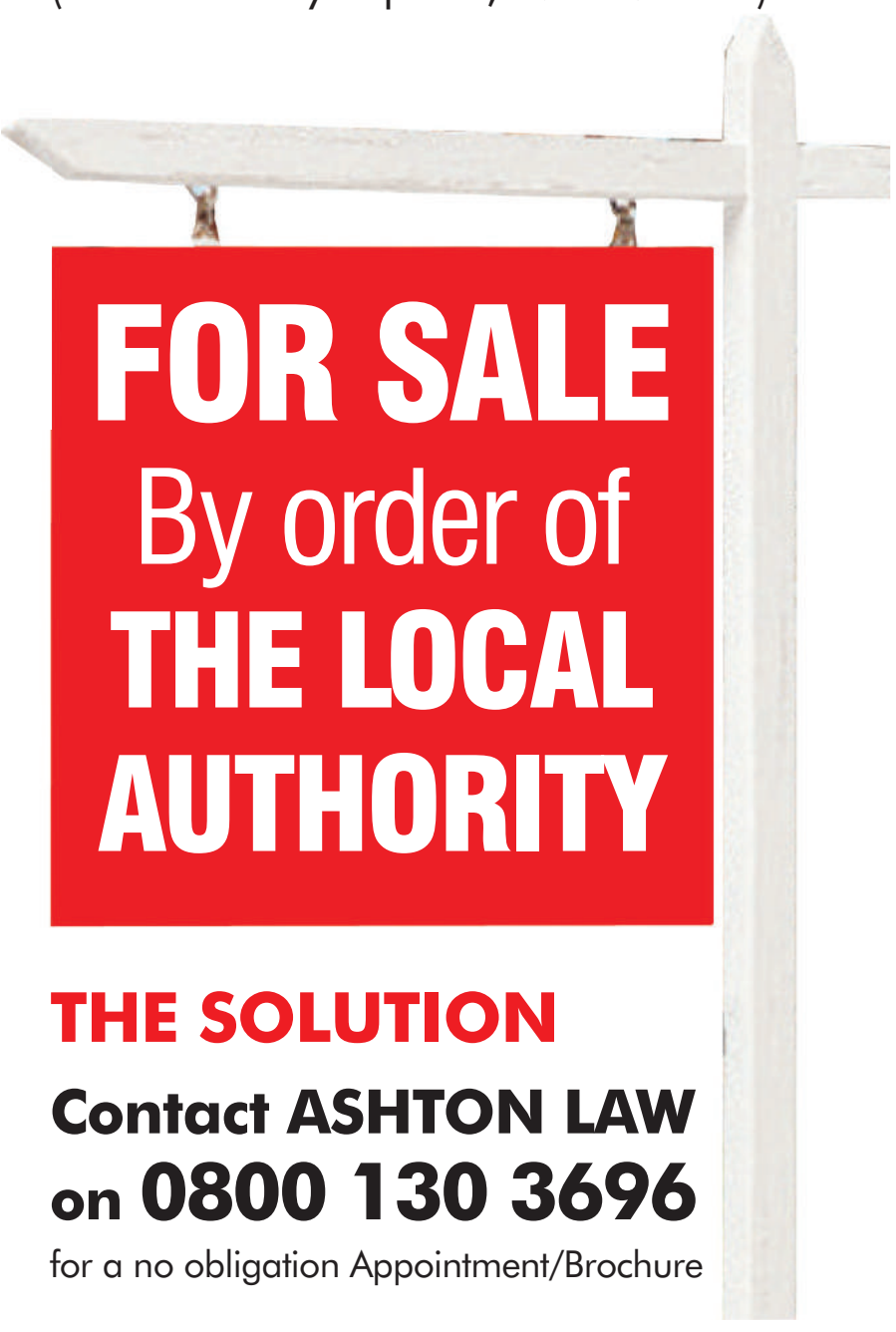

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Edge Hill earns top rating for safety - again!

FIGURES released by The Complete University Guide show that Ormskirk's Edge Hill has once again been rated the safest in the North West - for the sixth year in a row.

Based on professional advice about the three crimes most relevant to students, universities are then ranked on the cumulative rate of all three crimes occurring over 12 months in those areas where students live in term-time.

Dr Bernard Kingston, principal author of The Complete University Guide.co.uk, said: "Our data accurately reflects the levels of crime of greatest relevance to students in the streets where they live while studying at university.

"They provide information that is not available to students from their prospective choices of university and which, alongside other advice, assist them to make informed decisions about where to live and study."

Dr John Cater, vice-chancellor at Edge Hill University, said: "Students at Edge Hill really value living on a safe and secure campus whilst having easy access to Liverpool, Manchester, Southport and the towns of the North West.

"We are delighted the Complete University Guide has recognised this for the sixth consecutive year."

Delighted - Dr John Cater, vice-chancellor of Edge Hill University

Strictly star Robin Windsor with teachers at McDonald Dance Academy

Strictly star visits local dance school

BUDDING dancers at a local academy were put through their paces by a very special guest when a star of Strictly Come Dancing paid them a visit.

Professional dancer, Robin Windsor, a regular on the BBC show, spent an evening with members of the McDonald Dance Academy, in Burscough.

The Liverpool Road academy teaches a variety of styles, including ballroom, Latin American, classical and modern for both children and adults.

Owner, Maureen Park, said: "Robin is a fantastic ambassador for ballroom dancing and an inspiration to the children with their competitive dancing."

Big-hearted firms' boiler rescue provides a warm glow for animal sanctuary team

STAFF and volunteers at a West Lancs charity which cares for hundreds of animals have thanked two generous firms for coming to the rescue when their boiler broke.

The team at Woodlands Animal Sanctuary, based in Holmeswood, put out a call for help when their heating system failed, leaving their Sandy Lane shelter without heating or hot water and putting many of their unwell and vulnerable animals at risk in the current cold weather.

But after a member of staff spotted the post on social media, M&Y Maintenance and Construction contacted the sanctuary, which relies entirely on donations and sponsorship for funding, to offer its support.

A boiler was provided free of charge by builders merchants, MKM Southport, and M&Y Maintenance and Construction organised for one of its staff to fit it.

Members of the Woodlands team with their new boiler and some of the animals they are caring for

Hannah Cannon, an animal carer at Woodlands, said: "We are absolutely delighted that the two firms came to the rescue. Without heating in the shelter we wouldn't be able to provide the care we usually give to the animals that come to us often in a desperate state."

Gill Kelly, of M&Y Maintenance and Construction, said: "We are a team of animal lovers so there was no question about providing support once we heard of Woodlands' troubles.

"Our contractor, Lee Edwards, has also agreed to perform the 12-month service for free and ensure the boiler remains under warranty. I'm delighted we have been able to help a great charity and ensure all the animals have a warm winter."

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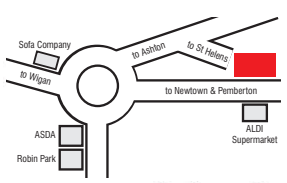

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Transport police issue festive period warning to rail passengers

'Keep a Clear Head' campaign aims to curb incidents of alcohol-fuelled antisocial behaviour

Report by **Tom Martin**

British Transport Police are urging rail passengers to 'Keep a Clear Head' when travelling over the festive period

BRITISH Transport Police is warning rail commuters that they run the risk of being arrested if they act in an anti-social or violent way on trains over the festive period.

Officers from the BTP say they experience a rise in the number of reports of passengers fuelled by alcohol causing problems on trains around this time of year.

Together with Network Rail and the Rail Safety and Standards Board, the BTP have launched the 'Keep a Clear Head' campaign to remind passengers to be responsible.

Superintendent Eddie Wylie said: "Unfortunately, during the festive season, we see a rise in public order offences and antisocial behaviour. Much of this is down to the people involved drinking too much and behaving in a way that would shock them and their family and friends if they were sober.

"We want everyone to get to their destination safely. Our officers will be out on the network in the North of England helping people to enjoy the festivities safely and encouraging them to think about how alcohol can affect the way they behave and the effect this has on their fellow passengers.

"If you're using the railways to get around this Christmas, please keep a clear head. Think about what you would do and how you would behave if you were sober. There is no excuse for spoiling other people's journeys or behaving any differently because you've drunk alcohol. We want you to have fun but it's more important to get where you're going safely.

"Though trains are the safest way to get around, passengers and people living near the railway must always remember that it can be a dangerous place. That's why we're reminding the public to remain alert to those dangers whilst they're having fun over the festive season.

"Taking a short cut across the tracks, chancing it at level crossings or tripping at the platform edge can, at best cause delays to your journey; at worse it can result in serious harm. Enjoy yourself but don't let alcohol stop you or your fellow passengers from getting to where you need to be – keep a clear head."

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Champion LETTERS to the Editor

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tel 01704 392 400 email editor@champnews.com

This Government has no intention of saving our NHS

I WRITE in support of the letter (December 6) from Mr Colin Brown, ex-deputy political editor of The Independent.

It is truly shocking and unacceptable that his niece has had her healthcare funding withdrawn.

Indeed, the fact that eight out of 12 members of the Midland and Lancashire CCG are paid over £100,000 a year is obscene and I too would rather see that money cut and given to the NHS. But that would not save it, as this government has more sinister plans and so far they are right on track.

The 2010 Health and Social Care Act created the legislation for the slow but sure privatisation of our NHS. In Skelmersdale the CCG gave the contract for the Walk In Clinic to Virgin Care or as I prefer to call it, Virgin Don't Care - well they care but only about profit.

Only this month Richard Branson sued our NHS and was awarded in excess of £328,000, because he failed to get a contract for Children's Services in Surrey.

Why does a multi-millionaire need or even want to sue the NHS, money that could be spent on sick people? Moreover, why did our Government allow him to do this? The answer is simple. As soon as Branson owns the whole cake anyone sick will be required to pay and if they can't then tough.

Theresa May said herself that after Brexit the NHS will not be off the table in any trade deal with the USA. Furthermore, her NHS attack dog, Jeremy Hunt, co-authored a book on how the NHS could be moved towards the USA model.

The Government has no intention of saving our NHS. Instead from here on in it is just a managed decline, break up the NHS and sell it off bit by bit.

Unfortunately by time the vast majority wake up it will be too late and it will be their children and grandchildren who will have to live with the consequences.

However, never mind, we still have I'm A Celebrity Get Me Out Of Here!

Joe Welsh,
Tanhouse, Skelmersdale

If they can't afford to repair existing roads what hope is there for the long-awaited bypass?

I READ with interest the letter from a gentleman of Scarisbrick (Champion, November 29) regarding the potential Burscough/Ormskirk Bypass.

I know this is to be addressed soon, but previous excuses included that all the traffic on the A59 road is local traffic so does not warrant a bypass.

I beg to differ, with all the new housing currently being built in and around Burscough, and future development on the Yew Tree Farm site, 'local' traffic will grow out of proportion to the already busy major trunk route through the village, and that's without considering all the HGVs thundering through to get to the growing industrial and new retail estates.

I'm all for a bypass, but I'd like to point out - as I don't think it's been publicly announced or defended for the people of Burscough - they can't even finish resurfacing the A59. Now the money has run out to finish the rest and 'may' be included in the new financial year after April 2018.

Even Councillor Fillis himself admitted earlier this year: "The A59 in Burscough is the worst road in West Lancashire for potholes" (which takes some beating). So how come a major, dangerous road cannot be maintained and fixed?

From January 2017 promises have been repeatedly made to address the very serious concerns of the state of the A59 from the Bull & Dog pub, past the Square Lane junction and along to Richmond Avenue. Residents along this stretch feel very let down and bitterly disappointed. Why send out a letter of promise and then not complete the project? Surely the estimate to repair a major A road in West Lancashire, that has been identified as the worst for potholes would be a priority to fix?

After 20 years in local government myself (fortunately not West Lancashire) I've never known such inability to succeed in delivering. If they can't resurface a road that is in urgent need of fixing and the priority for many Burscough inhabitants, how are they able to achieve a bypass in future years?

Interested, by email, details supplied

PICTURE of the week

Santa decided to give his reindeers a well-earned rest when he arrived at West Lancashire Light Railway by steam engine last weekend to give out presents to young rail enthusiasts. Picture by Martyn Snape.

Plans for Skem town centre all have the same outcome - failure!

WE moved to the area some 17 years ago and over the ensuing years I have taken a keen interest in the continued proposals and broken promises with regards to Skelmersdale town redevelopment.

As we all know, this has taken many different forms, but sadly with one consistent and inevitable outcome - failure.

It is with this thought in mind that I read this week St Helens' '8 Steps' to transform their town centre: ● A new shopping mix. ● Canal re-generation. ● An arts and culture centre. ● Creating a better entertaining offer. ● Modern town centre living. ● Better connectivity. ● Taking pride in heritage. ● Improving open spaces.

Now in my mind it's not rocket science - a set of simple, achievable, but challenging goals.

If I was a betting man then, sadly, I suspect that St Helens will succeed before Skelmersdale.

John Gallagher, Up Holland

These bus yobs should be made to walk

TEENAGE boys, travelling by bus from Skelmersdale to school in Ormskirk regularly disturb the peace of other travellers with their constant shouting and nasty behaviour.

The schools and their parents should teach them what is the right behaviour on a public transport or the driver should make them walk if they cannot behave. We other customers haven't paid our tickets to be deaf by the end of the journey.

They have no common sense and absolutely no respect for others.

Disappointed commuter, by email

Show was a real treat

MY wife entered a recent competition run by your paper for a chance to see a show at the Liverpool Empire theatre and won.

We attended the show and it was a real treat. We were seated in the middle of the theatre and had a great view of a very entertaining show, *Crazy For You*.

The cast were all amazingly talented and all played musical instruments, as well as singing and dancing.

Many thanks for running such competitions. Very much appreciated.

Mr and Mrs J. Eaton

Remainers' arguments are relying on speculation and misinformation

MIKE Fawcett (Letters, November 29) makes much of the hyperbole of a previous correspondent and suggests that using facts gives a different picture of Brexit.

However, in line with other Remainers, he then fails to use any facts to bolster his argument and relies on speculation and misinformation.

Certainly two European agencies are locating to mainland Europe but the vast majority of staff will return with them with no loss of employment.

Certainly the Chancellor confirmed rumours about a reduction in economic growth but this is economic speculation and how many times have the economists been wrong?

He must also ask himself why we have so few construction workers available in this country and inevitably have to rely on overseas workers. I would suggest that the construction companies have taken the easiest (and probably cheapest) avenue to staffing their workforce rather than plan more effectively for skilled labour. Similarly, nurses, doctors, etc.

He must also have a crystal ball if he is so confident in the FTSE collapsing (is the pound weak or has it been over-valued in previous years?). A fact in this area is that the majority of investment in the UK is from abroad.

I need no-one to apologise for me for trying to prevent our country being federalised by an organisation led by a Franco-German alliance that is self-serving and lacks competency. Did he know that the audits carried out on EU activities have never been signed off to legitimise these activities?

Surely the behaviour of those Europeans involved in the 'negotiations' gives a clue to how they would like to behave all the time. His categorisation of those who chose to leave the Union is both lazy and inaccurate.

The whole Referendum process has been a shambles from the start but it is where we are and the issue now appears to be how we are being let down by our own politicians in the process.

Stan King, Aughton

Rise in intolerance is sad consequence of EU Referendum

THE most defining consequence of last June's Referendum was not only the result itself, but the creation of family feuds, fractured friendships and an insurgence of intra-national intolerance.

Frank Baybutt's letter (Champion, November 22) puts into perspective the sad state that we all now find ourselves truly immersed in.

He could well be right when he says that the future will be brighter out of the EU, or indeed, he might be totally wrong, because I firmly believe that no-one at this point really knows what the future holds post-Brexit.

Let's try, especially at this time of year, to be a little more tolerant; whether it be of someone's actions or opinions.

Anyway, on Christmas Day I shall raise a glass of good French wine to one and all, Remainers and Brexiteers. I have good friends in both camps. Cheers.

James McGregor, by email

Residents urged to check pharmacy opening times during festive holidays

THE NHS West Lancashire Clinical Commissioning Group is reminding residents of pharmacy opening hours over the festive season.

Details of pharmacies open throughout the Christmas Bank Holiday period are available on the CCG's website at www.westlancashireccg.nhs.uk.

Your local pharmacy can offer free, confidential and expert advice on a range of health issues; help people to self-care and prepare for many common winter illnesses; and offer advice on which medicines to keep in stock at home.

Remember Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve fall on Sunday this year so if you need a pharmacist on either day, visit www.nhs.uk to see which are open.

Pharmacies open on Chrstmas Day, Boxing Day and New Year's Day are:

Christmas Day, Monday, December 25

Aspire Pharmacy, 9 Railway Road, Ormskirk, Lancashire, L39 2DN, tel. 01695 580 022, 10am to 1pm.

Boxing Day Tuesday, December 26

Asda Pharmacy, Ingram, Skelmersdale, WN8 6LA, tel. 01695 567 010, 9am to 6pm.

Dr John Caine

Morrisons In-store Pharmacy, Park Road/Aughton Street, Ormskirk, Lancashire, L39 3RB, tel. 01695 573 289, 10am to 4pm.

New Year's Day, Monday, January 1

Asda Pharmacy, Ingram, Skelmersdale, WN8 6LA, tel. 01695 567 010, 10am to 6pm

Dr John Caine, West Lancashire GP and chair at the NHS West Lancashire Clinical Commissioning Group, said: "With GP practices closed on the Bank Holiday weekends, it is important that residents, especially those who require a repeat prescription, plan well ahead.

"Several pharmacies will be open, so that if you or a loved one falls ill, there is help out there. Not only that, but pharmacists can offer support to help encourage self-care.

"You don't need to make an appointment to speak to your pharmacist and you can expect a confidential and discrete consultation within a private area in the pharmacy.

"It's important to remember that A&E and 999 services are under particular pressure over this time of the year and are for life-threatening and serious conditions, so by planning ahead and using your local pharmacy, you can not only avoid any unnecessary visits to the A&E, but also help to ease pressure and ensure that the service is readily available for people when they need it most."

Our Lady's RC primary school pupil Francesca switches on the lights watched by organisers, Bev Hayman and Tim Cornah.

Villagers brave cold to take part in annual carols event

RESIDENTS in Parbold braved inclement weather to take part in the village's annual Carols Round the Christmas Tree event.

Pupils from Our Lady and All Saints Catholic Primary and Parbold Douglas Academy sang three songs together, the Sing 4 Fun group from the village also took part and music was provided by the Red Admiral Music Academy from Mawdesley.

Reverend Sue Timmins from Christ Church in Parbold addressed the crowd and there were mince pies and mulled wine to help keep out the cold as well.

One of the organisers, Bev Hayman, said: "It was good to see the schools working together during the night and it was a fitting send-off for Tim Cornah who has helped organise the evening for the last nine years and is emigrating to Canada in the New Year."

Martin Charlton whose company is celebrating 20 years after recovering from a devastating fire in 2015.

Rising from the ashes

Report by **Kenny Parker**

Coach company bounces back from devastating fire to celebrate 20th anniversary

A MINI-coach company which lost half of its vehicles in a fire two years ago has risen from the ashes to celebrate 20 years of being in business.

Charlton Minicoaches was devastated by the blaze on Boxing Day, 2015 when an HGV parked near to the coaches on their former site at Burscough Industrial Estate caught fire.

Six of the company's fleet of 12 coaches were completely destroyed, along with vehicles from another company and six cars.

But owners of the family-run company have worked hard to come back from the disaster and are celebrating 20 years of transporting customers and also expanding into larger premises at Merlin Park on Burscough Industrial Estate.

Launched in 1997 by Martin Charlton, the company initially specialised in providing wheelchair-accessible transport to the local community before branching out into local bus services, school transport and private hire work.

And as they continued to grow managing director Martin took daughter Katie and son Jack on board to help with the running of the business.

After the fire they had to pay for the hire of replacement coaches but they fulfilled all their bookings and say they didn't let anyone down.

Martin said: "This is a very special milestone for us, especially after the devastating fire two years ago.

"But we have bounced back and I'm proud of what we have achieved. I'd like to thank our hard-working staff and loyal customers for supporting us over the years. Now we're looking forward to the next 20 years."

Reporting strays over Christmas

IF you need to report a stray dog in West Lancashire between Sunday, December 24 and Tuesday, January 2 (except for Christmas Day, Boxing Day and New Year's Day) ring the borouch council's contracted kennels, Leigh Dogs and Cats Home, on 07786 118088.

Strays will be collected and taken back to the home and any pet owners wishing to collect their pets must contact the home first on 01942 671215.

The kennels will be closed Christmas Day, Boxing Day and New Year's Day and there will be no collection service on these days. However, in the event of someone finding a stray dog, it can be dropped off at the home between 9 and 11am on Boxing Day and New Year's Day.

For details of when the home will be open and the service available, call the above number or visit www.leighdogsandcatshome.co.uk.

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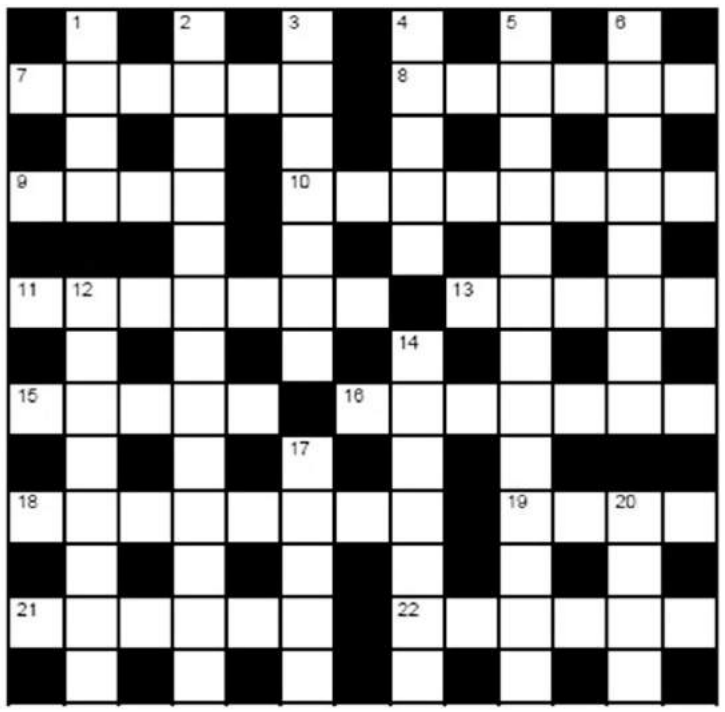

Last week's solutions:
Across: 7. Reinforcement. 8. Espresso. 9. Raid. 10. Recycle. 12. Islet. 14. Psych. 16. Goodbye. 19. Emit. 20. Optician. 22. Alpha particle.
Down: 1. Fees. 2. Energy. 3. Consult. 4. Actor. 5. Smarts. 6. Untimely. 11. Ensemble. 13. Lottery. 15. Catchy. 17. Deceit. 18. Coypu. 21. Ally.

ACROSS

7. Not making a sound (6)
8. Relating to a population sub-group with a common national or cultural tradition (6)
9. System of electronic credit transfer involving banks, post offices, and public utilities (4)
10. Sudden occurrence of something unwelcome, such as war or disease (8)
11. Long, round, and hollow like a tube (7)
13. Firm and stable in shape, not liquid or fluid (5)
15. Unpleasantly bitter or pungent (5)
16. Having a pleasantly sharp taste flavour (7)
18. Another term for tofu (4,4)
19. Light coating or quick application of something, especially paint (4)
21. Two-wheeled horse-drawn cab seating two inside with driver seated behind (6)
22. Sloping typeface (6)

DOWN

1. Flightless New Zealand bird (4)
2. Change something radically or fundamentally (13)
3. Turkish dynasty that ruled an empire from the end of the 13th century until the First World War (7)
4. Mooring (5)
5. Relating to or using nuclear reactions that occur only at very high temperatures (13) .
6. Living or located on the banks of a natural watercourse, such as a river (8)
12. Personification of the USA government (5, 3)
14. Contempt, scorn (7)
17. Former name of Myanmar (5)
20. Protruding part of the face below the mouth (4)

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Sue Moore (3rd right) picking up the award with other members of the team

Care trust wins award for innovation in mental health services

LANCASHIRE Care NHS Foundation Trust was awarded for its improved quality community mental health services at the Healthcare Financial Management Association (HFMA) National Healthcare Finance Awards.

The local health and wellbeing provider was crowned the winner of the Innovation Award at the ceremony in central London. The prestigious annual awards celebrate excellence in financial departments across the NHS.

The trust was chosen to receive the accolade from a strong field across the UK and was recognised for its work in developing improved, innovative, community mental health services for people in Lancashire. The award focused on the finance department's role in delivering a project with improved quality in an efficient and sustainable manner.

Sue Moore, chief operating officer at Lancashire Care NHS Foundation Trust, said: "It's such an honour to receive the Innovation Award for work that our services have been doing to ensure that the people of Lancashire receive the best care possible. We have been working so hard to develop community mental health services in Lancashire and we feel extremely proud to be recognised for providing innovative, high quality services that are also financially efficient.

"The event really highlights the dedication from organisations across the country and for us in particularly, has showcased the fantastic partnership working between the mental health network and our finance department!"

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Advice on storing and cooking your Christmas turkey

WEST Lancs Council has teamed up with the Food Standards Agency (FSA) to offer residents in the borough advice on how to avoid food poisoning when cooking the Christmas turkey.

From buying the bird through to storing leftovers, there are a number of food hygiene tips you can follow to protect your loved ones.

1. When Christmas food shopping, take sufficient bags with you so that you can separate out raw and ready-to-eat foods to avoid cross-contamination.

2. Check the guidance on your frozen turkey to ensure you have enough time to fully defrost it – it could take as long as four days.

3. Don't wash raw turkey. It just splashes germs onto your hands, clothes, utensils and worktops.

4. To work out the cooking time for your bird, check the instructions on the packaging. Then when cooked, check the meat is steaming hot throughout, there is no pink meat visible when you cut into the thickest part, and meat juices run clear.

5. Whether you cooked your turkey from frozen or fresh, your turkey leftovers can be used to make a new meal (such as a turkey curry). This new meal can then be frozen, but make sure you only re-heat it once.

Dr Kevin Hargin, head of foodborne disease control at the FSA, said: "Every year, there are an estimated one million cases of food poisoning in the UK; the easiest way to protect your family this Christmas is to ensure you store and cook food safely."

And Councillor Kevin Wright, West Lancs Council's portfolio holder for health, added: "For many of us, it wouldn't be Christmas without turkey. However, cooking for a crowd can be a lot of pressure, from having to think about various defrosting and cooking times, to ensuring that all the food is stored safely.

Many people will enjoy a traditional turkey dinner this Christmas but run the risk of food poisoning unless they follow safety guidelines on cooking and storage.

"Raw and under-cooked turkey can cause food poisoning and have serious consequences especially for children, people already in ill-health and older people. This is why the council is supporting the Food Standards Agency in helping you to cook your festive bird with confidence this Christmas."

An FSA guide, 'Let's talk turkey', offers more detailed advice around chilling, cleaning, cooking and avoiding cross-contamination when preparing turkey and other birds and also explains some of the science behind its guidance.

To see the guide and for more food safety information visit www.food.gov.uk/letstalkturkey. You can alsofollow @foodgov #LetsTalkTurkey on Twitter for tips and advice throughout the festive period.

More information on the council's food safety service can be found on the authority's website at www.westlancs.gov.uk/foodsafety.

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Wed 27th Dec - Sat 30th Dec 11.30-2.00 4.30-10.00

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XMAS DAY:
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6–2
(WIGAN PIER)

WED 27TH DEC:
CLOSED

THU 28TH DEC:
5–11

FRI 29TH DEC:
5–2

SAT 30TH DEC:
12–2

NYE:
12–2

My Christmas will be limited but nonetheless joyous for that

BY the time you read this I will have put up my Christmas decorations - rather pitiful though they may be.

I have my little Christmas tree, complete with fibre optic lights, which I bought just after my mum died to cheer our celebrations for my late brother George and I.

Even new, its illuminations didn't really live up to the shining illustrations on its box, and the years have led to it becoming rather dimmer still - though I suppose I should be grateful that what was at the forefront of Yuletide illumination when new is still working at all after 15 years or so. And a couple of years ago I purchased a string of more conventional fairy lights which work very well, leaving the fibre optics as a sort of background colour.

Happily, and I confess I have no idea why, none of the dogs (both Tina and Cinders postdate the tree by several years) take any notice of it whatever - perhaps they don't see the colours. Actually, I have puzzled for some time about both the sight and hearing of dogs, our rough collies at least. None of a succession of them have been remotely interested in television pictures, which I put down to them needing rather more than 625 lines to make out 'real' images.

But the sound is stranger still. They must be able to hear the TV (and radio for that matter) but again take little notice of them. In fact, Cinders seems to ignore them completely, while Tina responds to dogs barking but not to human voices, explosions or screams - you name it, they are of no interest to her at all.

All this means that the little tree remains undisturbed by canines, though I'm certain disaster would result if anything remotely edible was placed around or on it. Cinders is, as I have remarked before, the greediest creation on earth. She will scoff anything even remotely edible but never makes herself ill.

Anyway, I have now to plan our culinary delights for Christmas dinner and tea, and Boxing Day dinner too. Christmas always poses difficulties for folk living alone. Historically, my family always had a goose for Christmas dinner, with the more usual turkey on boxing day. After my mum died, George and I actually carried this tradition on, though usually we substituted a good quality duck for the rather expensive goose.

But really, for one person - even including the dogs - this is not only expensive but also probably very wasteful. I think, though the menu might well change before Christmas day. A small duck might be the thing for Christmas dinner, with the addition of perhaps some ham. It would also furnish the basis of a jolly good Christmas tea-cum-supper too.

I'll just have to see what turkey product might prove sensible for Boxing Day, though I might treat us to a festive half shoulder of lamb instead.

Christmas pud is already seen to. I still have a small pud unused since last year, and indeed one from the year before that too.

But then there are all the side bits and bobs as well. Things like cranberry sauce, which I like very much with Christmas poultry, are all very well, but it's such a waste buying a bottle of the stuff just for one,

In the past we always bought one of those cheese board selections, but again that's too much for one, so I will have to select just a small singleton cheese for myself.

And crackers aren't much fun on your own, or paper hats. The dogs won't wear them anyway.

Still, I will have my traditional open fire and company who will not contradict either my preferences in food.

So I'm certain my Christmas, though limited in scope, will be a joyous occasion, and I sincerely hope that all of you have a wonderful Christmas too, in good cheer and harmony.

December Deadlines

Due to the festive period, the booking deadlines for advertising are as follows:

For publication **Wednesday 27th December 2017**
DEADLINE
4pm on Thursday 21st December 2017

For publication **Wednesday 3rd January 2018**
DEADLINE
4pm on Friday 29th December 2017

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Sam Kane star of 'fast-paced' pantomime

Review by **Henry James**

SAM Kane is the star of this year's Southport Theatre pantomime Cinderella.

The actor who played the hairdresser Peter Phelan in the Channel 4 soap Brookside is Buttons and also directs the show.

He has been doing pantomime for more than 30 years and his experience certainly shows as he knows how to involve the young audience in the performance. He also holds the action together, which is fast-paced.

Making a welcome return this year in the Southport Theatre pantomime are Jason Marc-Williams and Alistair Barron as the ugly sisters Cushelle and Andrexia. They come into their own in a scene with Buttons and shaving foam, and one of them very nearly did the splits on the night I went to see the show. Their routines are also up to date and they enter the show looking like characters from Star Wars.

It is also a family affair for this year's panto as Sam Kane's son, Jack Kane, is playing Dandini. He is the faithful sidekick of the prince (Tom Milner) who falls for Cinderella (Toni Howard) who has a good singing voice.

Cinderella's carriage for the ball awaits

There are some note-worthy set pieces in the show. Look out for Cinderella's impressive carriage at the end of the first half, which is created by her Fairy Godmother (Justine Bailey). This is always one of the most important scenes and this production managed to pull it off. Although the carriage comes on at the back of the stage and I feel it would have had more impact at the front.

The ghost scene is a must of any pantomime and it can be found here.

Sam Kane also has a good rapport with the children who are invited on to the stage at the end of the show.

On the night I went to, one of the children nearly stole the production. There were four youngsters on the stage, and at the end Sam Kane handed out the chocolates to three of them, and by the time he reached the fourth, he jokingly said he had ran out. However, one of the children handed her sweets to the child who had none, and received a round of applause from the audience.

Cinderella which is on until Saturday, January 6 is well-worth having a look at this Christmas. 7/10

Craig David

Craig David first act booked for summer season at racecourse

THE Jockey Club Live and Aintree Racecourse have announced that Grammy and BRIT award nominated and multi platinum-selling artist Craig David is the first act booked for their summer season, and will headline an open air concert on June 15 2018.

He has sold more than 15 million albums, achieved 16 Top Ten hits and multi-platinum status in more than 20 countries, taking over festival stages around the world, selling out headline tours in seconds and secured a residency at the iconic Ibiza Rocks Hotel.

David rose to success with hit singles including 7 Days, Fill Me In and Walking Away, and 16 years later he was catapulted back into the charts and in to the nation's hearts with Big Narstie on the gold certified single When The Bassline Drops, marking the beginning of his triumphant return.

He has since released the number 1 album Following My Intuition, and will be followed by new album The Time Is Now, out January 2018 via Sony Records.

The first track from his new album, I Know You, features alt-pop giants Bastille. Going from success to success, David also recently won his sixth MOBO Award of his career for Best R&B/Soul Act.

John Baker, regional director for Jockey Club Racecourses North West, said: "We are delighted to confirm Craig David's first headline show at Aintree racecourse on June 15. His live shows are renowned, having sold out arenas across the country I have no doubt we are instore for an incredible performance full of hits."

In previous years, Aintree Racecourse has hosted concerts by artists including Tom Jones, Deacon Blue, Jess Glynne and Kaiser Chiefs.

henry.james@champnews.com

Christmas show opens at Liverpool Empire

POP star Duncan James and actress and singer Jodie Prenger are appearing in this year's family pantomime, Cinderella.

Playing Prince Charming is singer-songwriter, television presenter, actor and all-round entertainer Duncan James.

Best-known as a member of the band Blue, Duncan and his bandmates released five studio albums, 16 singles, collaborated with artists including Stevie Wonder and Elton John and represented the UK in the 2011 Eurovision Song Contest.

Best-known for winning the coveted role of Nancy in the West End revival of Lionel Bart's Oliver! through the BBC talent show I'd Do Anything, Jodie Prenger rose to fame singing for survival in front of a panel of famous judges and millions of television viewers every Saturday night. After a brief appearance in Les Misérables, Jodie went on to perform the role of Nancy at the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane.

The show is on until Sunday, January 7.

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4pm on Thursday 21st December 2017

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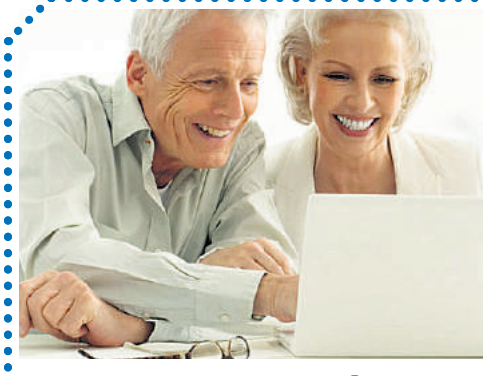

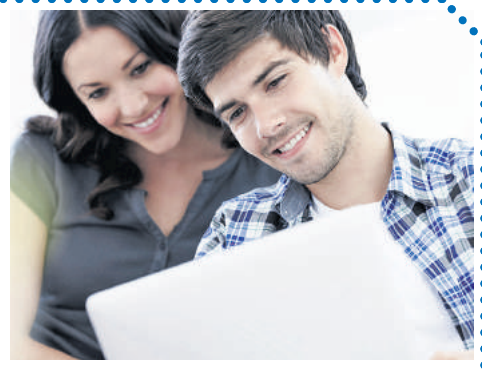

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GIBSON PICKUP Retail boxed genuine 490T double black bridge pickup. Genuine USA, full length armoured cable, excellent condition £85 01704831977

ORNAMENTAL COTTAGES Four different Irish Heritage Collection ornamental cottages, from the range called Fisherman's Cottage. £10.00 07387439004

HOBBIES

GUITAR TUNER Boss Tu-15 chromatic guitar and bass tuner, as new, original box. Professional tuning device. Excellent for setting intonation accurately £50 01704831977

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Children's QUAD BIKES (x 4)
2 Petrol, 2 Battery
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HOME ENTERTAINMENT

VALENCIA ELECRO-ACOUSTIC Classical full size guitar in excellent condition. Nylon strings. Beautiful tone. With hard case. £79. 07808484721

ROY WOOD New CD ROY WOOD & WIZARD. The Best of and The Rest of. Brand new in wrapping - £5 01704 551398

WANTED I5 LAPTOP large ram memory etc need good one NEW only or pass as new with box cash waiting upto £150 for good one 07743101819

LG TELEVISION LG LED 37" Television hardly used as new. (Not a Smart TV) Can be collected or delivered to Ormskirk. £99.00. 07881610858

26" TV Wharfdale DV3 HD TV. Model LCD27. Complete with wall brackets and stand. Ideal for a bedroom. Aughton area. £45 07772 757818

HOME ENTERTAINMENT

SAMSUNG S7 EDGE mobile phone EDGE great condition 2 covers box wire unused headphones bargain price no offers no withheld numbers £280 07743101819

HOUSE AND HOME

TEA TROLLY £15 01704 876907

LARGE TABLE & chairs. FREE buyer collect 01704 538452

MARBLE FIRE back, beige, 40x40 £30 07564223114

X3 TABLES Glass tops £15 01704 876907

DRINKS CABINET Glow Bar, excellent condition £80 0151 5200097

HOOVER pet smart 1900w, bagless, tools, excellent condition £25 01515201255

WOODEN BLINDS 4 wooden blinds with cream ribbon down sides £25 07786298207

LLADRO FIGURE Large beautiful piece of Lladro, make great present, £150 01704 573121

CURTAIN POLE 9ft.(300cm.) DarkWood c/w Finials & Curtain Rings £10 01704 876031

LIGHT OAK Head Board 57" wide 48" high vertical slat £5 01704 876907

KIGYO BINOCULARS Japanese 10x50 EC case and strap £25 07564223114

XMAS TREE with lights three feet high plus bag of decorations £5 01704 876907

HOTPOINT condensing tumble dryer, white, twelve months old, 8kg, like new £90 0151 3788667

DYSON VACUUM DYSON D50. Excellent condition with range of parts. £75 Formby 01704 875561

CHINESE RUG red beige & green £75. Hall carpet blue, pink & cream £40 both excellent condition 01704 578671

ROLLER BLINDS 9 cream roller blinds with chrome eyelets was in conservatory excellent condition £35 07786298207

HOUSE AND HOME

CHRISTMAS TREE Black Christmas tree with all silver decorations from John Lewis £30 07786298207

FINE CHINA 18 piece tea service 6 plates 6 cups and saucers brand new still in box may deliver £15 ono 01515263851

TWO 3 light ceiling fitting in polished brass with three glass shades traditional style may deliver £16 ono 01515263851

GLASS CAKE STANDS One tier nice designs great for weddings xmas etc £5 each no withheld number or texts 07504685036

MICROWAVE OVEN white, manual timer, 700 watts, can be seen working, can deliver £15 Southport 214498

DARTBOARD quality dartboard still in box as used in pubs immaculate bargain £10 01515319425/07773242918

JVC TV 19", £25, buyer collects. Also 25" Panasonic TV £50 and 32" JVC £100. Phone or text 07513 420224

BEKO DISHWASHER silver, working order, new kitchen forces sale, absolute bargain £50 ono 07754 383614

30 PIECE crockery dining set, mint condition, plates, cups, saucers, dishes etc £20 01257 451485

CHRISTMAS TREE 6 Foot Green artificial Christmas tree with stand in box in good condition. £10 01704 560150

CAT ORNAMENT Past Times black cat ornament with tail hanging down in nice condition. £10 01704 560150

M&S SOFA 3 seat sofa gold fabric traditional style comfortable firm cushions in great condition hardly used £120 01704549616

FRIDGE FREEZER
As new £85.
Tel:01704 893562

HOUSE AND HOME

ELECTRIC TABLE Top hostess 3 pyrex dishes keeps food hot £25. Black leather swivel chair £15. Pine TV corner unit lead light doors £15 0151 5266235

SINGLE BED with storage via sliding draws. Including headboard suit male/female. Used for occasional use sale due to house move £40 07935641474

BEAUTIFUL ELECTRIC fire very modern in black surround, remote control hardly used can be seen working bargain £200 ono 07935641474

DESK/WORKSTATION IN beech wood on castors 133 cms high and 77 cms wide plenty of shelves and storage space £30 ono 01515263851

THREE LIGHT ceiling fitting in polished brass with 3 glass shades excellent quality and condition may deliver £9 ono 01515263851

TABLECLOTHS Cotton red, red/green, green. Great for Christmas. Large size. £5 each. No withheld numbers or texts 07504685036

TENS MACHINE PAIN RELIEVER In association St John ambulance. Used 4 times. With box of extra pads. As new £18 01704 224039

HAIR STRAIGHTNERS Never been used, in box. Remington Ionic steam, ceramic straighteners. Can e-mail pic. £15 01704 551398

HOUSE AND HOME

DIMPLEX CHEVALIER cream electric stove fire, remote control, double doors, coal or log bed, 2 heat settings, hardly used £150 07999 580714

OCCASIONAL TABLE Pine table 2 tier. Solid wood. Can be used as lamp table,small coffee table, end table etc. Cube shape. £12 01704 560150

DINING CHAIRS 4 x high back chairs. Dark brown almost black colouring with light oak legs. Excellent condition. Aughton area. £20 each. 07772 757818

DARK BROWN Leather 3 seater settee and One chair.VGC. £60.00 ono. 01704 894947

COCA COLA ADVERTISING POSTER. Rare find. Of Lillian Russell (1904). On hardboard backing in wooden frame. 28inch by 21inch. £25 Southport 01704 553972

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PINE BOOKCASE Nice solid pine bookcase 6 foot high 10" depth 35" wide with five 9" depth shelves, nice shape, strong and in very good condition. Sell for £99 07387439004

HOUSE AND HOME

CHRISTMAS TREE Stunning large full green artificial Christmas tree with pine cones. About 10 ft high. Breaks down into 3 pieces and has stand £50 01704 560150

OFFICE DESK Light wood coloured, 3-drawers underneath (LHS). Width 121cm x 72cm deep x 73cm high. Can email photos. Southport £25ono 01704 544948

SOFA BED As new. Complete with mattresss. 75" x 35". With pull out bed underneath. £300. 01257 464005

STORAGE BOX White wooden toy/ blanket/storage box with curved top and side metal handles. Painted flowers on top and front. Size H 18 x W 21 x D 15 inches in good condition. £30 01704 560150

HANGING LAMP SHADES Pair of 2 tier hanging lamp shades in duck egg blue / turquoise colour . The fabric is suede effect. Very good condition. Approx size diameter 11.5 inches (29 cm) height 12 inches (30 cm) £10 01704 560150

MISC

CALOR Butane bottle 15kg £15 Ormskirk 07553 928344

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December Deadlines

Due to the festive period, the booking deadlines for advertising are as follows:

For publication **Wednesday 27th December 2017**
DEADLINE
4pm on Thursday 21st December 2017

FAMILY ANNOUNCEMENTS

Engagements · Weddings
Christenings · Births
Deaths · In Memoriums
Congratulations · Prayers

call 01704 392 392
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

HART BARBARA

Elaine and Damian would like to express heartfelt thanks to all their family, friends neighbours and colleagues for the messages of condolence, flowers and support during this sad time. Special thank you to all the staff at Park Grove Care Home and Mr and Mrs Banks for the wonderful care, love and attention given to Barbara. Thank you to Father Daley for his kind ministrations, to the District Nurses, Doctors and other health professionals who provided excellent care and the staff at Stocks Hall Care Home Ormskirk who looked after Barbara during her stay there. Thank you to Sally Hunter and the team at MLS funeral directors for their dignified funeral arrangements,words of comfort and for helping to make the whole process more bearable. Finally thank you to everyone who attended Barbara's funeral and for the donations in her memory to the dogs trust and St John's The Evangelist Burscough.

To book your FAMILY ANNOUNCEMENTS call 01704 392 392 adverts.champnews.com

ROBERTS ANN CLARE (Clare)

Eric, Jacqueline and Amanda would like to express their heartfelt thanks to all their relatives, friends and neighbours for all their sympathy cards, messages of condolence and donations received for Redwings Horse Sanctuary during their recent sad loss. They would also like to extend their thanks to Sally and Lisa Hunter and their Team at MLS Funeral Directors for all their help, kindness and professionalism with the really big thank you to the outstanding horses and Wesley Media for their photo tribute. Also to the Rev Christine Draper for her helpfulness and compassion at this difficult time and to West Lancashire Crematorium for their professionalism. Thank you to Flexipress Printers, Ormskirk for their flexibility and high standards and The Hop Vine, Burscough for their understanding and lovely food. Lastly, many thanks to everyone who attended Clare's service and showed their support to the family.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

SCAMBLER JEAN

The family of Jean would like to thank relatives, friends and neighbours for their kind messages of sympathy and support, cards and generous donations at this sad time. Special thanks to the staff at Millbrook Nursing Home for their care and kindness. Thank you to the Rev David Dickinson for his kind ministrations and to Neal Buckley for dignified funeral arrangements.

WEATHERBY ANNIE

Annie's family would like to thank all relatives and friends for the kindness shown during the recent sad loss and for the cards of sympathy and donations to LIM (India). Grateful thanks to the staff and carers of Lyndale Nursing Home for their loving care and attention. Thanks also to Pastor Richard Vernon of Lakeside Christian Centre for a lovely Celebration of Life Service, and to Rev Michael Ogwuche for his special tribute. Thanks also to all those who helped serve refreshments. Thanks also to Alan Gwyther and staff of Porters Funeralcare for their caring and professional funeral arrangements.

DEATHS

DEVINE TERENCE JAMES (TERRY)

9th December 2017
Suddenly at home
Aged 71 years

Loving Dad of Terence, Ed, James and David, cherished Grandad and Great Grandad of all his Grandchildren. Will be sadly missed by all his family and friends. Funeral service will take place at St Mary Queen of Apostles on Friday 22nd December at 1.00pm followed by committal at West Lancashire Crematorium. All enquiries to Margaret Whitelam, Skelmersdale Funeral Service, 29/31 Sandy Lane. Tel 01695 559868.

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or check-out our website **www.champnews.com**

DEATHS

LAMB SANDRA

12th December
Aged 72 years of Burscough & Skelmersdale

Sadly Missed by Brother Harry, Friends and those at Hatts
All Enquiries to H Hardman & Co 01695 722122/581769

TRICKETT WILLIAM WINSTANLEY (BILL)

11th December 2017
Aged 77 years

Dearly beloved Husband of Sylvia and Father of Julia, Robert and James. Loving Grandad of Rebecca. Passed away following a long illness bravely borne. Family flowers only by request but donations gratefully received to Cancer Research UK. Funeral service at St Annes RC Church, Ormskirk on Thursday 21st December at 12:00 noon followed by committal at West Lancashire Crematorium.
All enquiries to Hunters of Ormskirk, 128B Burscough Street Tel 01695 572997.

SARATH WILLIAM (BILL)

Died peacefully at home on Monday 18th December surrounded by his family.

Wife Audrey, Daughters Louise and Mandy and Grandchildren Paul, Ben and Dan loved him dearly and will always be inspired by his positive outlook on life.
Funeral to be held at Ss Peter & Paul's Church, Crosby on Wednesday 27th December at 12 noon, followed by a reception at The Northern Club, Crosby.
Donations will be given to Dementia Uk.

DEATHS

WILDE CARL

Passed away on the 9th December 2017 aged 38 years

There will not be a day that goes by when we won't think of you,
There will not be a day goes by that we won't wonder where you are,
Your beautiful smile would light any room,
No words can describe the hole you have left in our hearts.
We sat at your bedside holding your hand,
We knew we had to part,
Your wings were ready but ours were not.
We will love and miss you forever.
From your heartbroken and loving family,
Dad Jack, Brother Justin, Sister in law Jo, Niece and Nephew Daniel and Daisy, your partner Antonia and the star of your life your beautiful Daughter Ava-Grace.
You were a brilliant and loving Father.
RIP

MAHOOD JEM WILLIAM

Died peacefully after a long battle at Royal Manchester Children's Hospital on the 10th December 2017

Cherished Son to Lucy & Kieran. Loving Brother to Bonnie & Hattie. Funeral service to take place at West Lancashire Crematorium, Burscough Friday 22nd December at 1.45pm. Family flowers only, however donations in memory of Jem are being gratefully received for Royal Manchester Children's Hospital & Ronald MacDonald House Manchester. Further enquiries to Newland & Wilkinson Independent Funeral Directors, 311 Hesketh Lane, Tarleton. 01772 811165.

DEATHS

STEAD MIKE

13th December 2017
Aged 75 years

Died peacefully at home surrounded by his family. Loving Husband of Sylvia. Much loved Dad of Mandy, Philip and Ian, cherished Grandad of Alex and Sam, adored Father-in-law of Denise, Angela and Paul. Mike will be greatly missed by all his family and friends. Service at Southport Crematorium on Friday 22nd December at 10:00am. Family flowers only please, but if desired donations are being gratefully received for Queenscourt Hospice. Donations and enquiries to Howard's Funeral Directors, 1-5 Roe Lane, Southport, PR9 9DR. Telephone: 01704 500086.

TAYLOR RICHARD BRIAN (BRIAN)

14th December 2017
Aged 84 Years

Died peacefully at home surrounded by his family. Loving Husband of Shirley. Much loved Dad of Beverley and Sharon. Father in law of Chris. Youngest Brother of the late Walter, Alan and John. Cherished Grandad of Jasmine, Shea and Taylor. Brian will be sadly missed by all his family and friends. Service at Southport Crematorium on Friday 22nd December at 12:00 noon. Family flowers only please, but if desired donations are being gratefully received for Parkinson's UK. Donations and enquiries to Howard's Funeral Directors, 1-5 Roe Lane, Southport, PR9 9DR. Telephone: 01704 500086.

BURRILL ROSE EVELYN

13th December 2017
Peacefully at Asmall Hall Nursing Home
Aged 92 years
formerly of Scarisbrick

She will be sadly missed by all her family.
Funeral service and Interment at St Mark's Church, Scarisbrick on Thursday 4th December 2017 at 10:30am.
Family flowers only please, donations if desired for St Mark's Church or St Elizabeth's RC Church.
All enquiries to Melanie Hardman at H Hardman & Co., Independent Family Funeral Directors of Ormskirk, Skelmersdale & Scarisbrick. Tel:- 01695 722122/720012

DEATHS

HUGHES LEN

Passed away peacefully on 18th December 2017 aged 94 years of Aughton

Devoted Husband of the late Joyce, Dearly loved Dad of Ian and Dear Father-In-Law of Jeanette, beloved Grandad of Lisa and Andy, Martin & Ali, Emma & Lee, Great-Grandad of Ben.
For Funeral arrangements and further enquiries please to Lisa Hunter MLS Independent Funeral Directors, 20 Moss Delph Lane, Aughton Tel: 01695 424888

LYNOTT JOSEPH (Joe)

On 13th December 2017
Aged 83 years

Loving Husband of the late Dolly, devoted Dad of Kim, Paul and Jan, cherished Grandad of Paul (Bo), Karla, Nadine and Abbey. Will be sadly missed by all his family and friends. Funeral Service will take place at West Lancashire Crematorium on Wednesday 27th December at 1:45pm. Family flowers only please. All enquiries to Margaret Whitelam, Skelmersdale Funeral Service, 29/31 Sandy Lane Tel: 01695 559868

FAZAKERLEY ELENA (LEE)

11th December 2017
Aged 79 years

Passed away peacefully after a long illness bravely fought with dignity.
Devoted Wife of Dave, much loved Sister of Thelma and Sylvia, Sister-in-law of Bill and Ricky and Nephews Michael, Richard, David and Niece Jo. Funeral service at Ormskirk Parish Church on Wednesday 27th December at 12.15pm followed by committal at West Lancs Crematorium. Family flowers only. All enquiries to Hunters of Ormskirk, 128b Burscough Street, Ormskirk L39 2EY. Tel 01695 572997.

DEATHS

FORSHAW DOREEN

On 11th December 2017 Peacefully after a long illness aged 81 years

Doreen will be very sadly missed by her Daughters Diane, Jill, Susan and Kath, also her Son-In-Laws and her Grandchildren and Great-Grandchildren.
"A smile for us all and a heart of gold, one of the best this world could hold, never selfish, always kind, beautiful memories left behind."
Funeral Service and Interment will take place today Wednesday 20th December at St Pauls Church at 2.00pm.
All enquiries to Margaret Whitelam Skelmersdale Funeral Service 29/31 Sandy Lane Tel: 01695 559868

WILDE CARL

9th December 2017
Suddenly, aged 38 years

Loving Partner of Antonia, devoted dad of Ava-Grace, much loved Son of Jack and Sylvia (Deceased), Brother of Justin, Brother-in-law of Jo and Uncle of Daniel and Daisy, will be sadly missed by all his family and friends. Requiem Mass will take place at St Richard's Church on Friday 22nd December at 9.45am followed by committal at St Helens Crematorium. Flowers or donations if desired for Twinkle House.
All enquiries to Margaret Whitelam, Skelmersdale Funeral Service, 29/31 Sandy Lane. Tel 01695 559868.

VAUGHAN ROSEMARY

Passed away peacefully at Queenscourt Hospice on 13th December 2017 aged 74 years of Ormskirk, formerly of St. Helens

Much Loved Wife of Peter, dearly Loved Mum of Jason and Kirsty. Devoted Nana of Daniel, Rhys, Joshua and Amelia, Loved and missed by all her family and friends.
Funeral Service at West Lancs Crematorium on Wednesday 20th December 2017 at 11.30 am. Family flowers only by request but donations if so desired for Queenscourt Hospice.
Donations and further enquiries please to Lisa Hunter MLS Independent Funeral Directors, 20, Moss Delph Lane, Aughton Tele. 01695 424888.

BIRTHDAY MEMORIAMS

CHRISTOPHER JAMES HORNBY

On Your 50th Birthday 23rd December 1967

Deep in our hearts there's a memory kept for a Son and Brother we'll never forget.
However hard it is we'll take comfort from all the memories we have and the happiness you brought.
From a loving family

WILLIAMS (BENNETT) JILL

22nd December
Precious memories of a dear daughter and sister

Memories are like leaves of gold,
they never tarnish or grow old,
though absent you are always near,
so loved, so missed,
so very dear,
with tender thoughts forever true,
today as always we think of you.
So sadly missed
From Mum, David, Nigel, Julie, Ian and family
xxxxx

IN MEMORIAM

DOYLE CHRISTOPHER DENHAM

In loving memory of the day you went away

They say that times a healer
But as the time goes on
I seem to find it just as hard
To face the fact you're gone

And today is the anniversary
Of the day you went away
And I'm standing here at your graveside
And believe me when I say

You'll never be forgotten
And every year I'll shed a tear
But it's only because I love you
And wish you were still here

RIP my darling
Your broken hearted Wife
Joan
XXX

IN MEMORIAM

DOYLE CHRISTOPHER DENHAM

24/12/15
Our Dad

He never looked for praises
He was never one to boast
He just went on quietly working
For the ones he loved the most

His dreams were seldom spoken
His wants very very few
And most of the time his worries
Went unspoken too

He was there,a firm foundation
Through all our storms of life
A sturdy hand to hold on to
In times of stress and strife

A true friend we could turn to
When times were good or bad
One of our greatest blessings
The man that we called DAD

Miss you always Dad.
Christopher X
Raymond X Michael X
Gary X
And all their families
X

GRIFFIN JOHN

25th December 2015

A lovely man, a good Husband and Dad.
Loved by his Sister-in laws, Nieces and Nephews.
At rest with his Son Paul.
All our love,
Wife Muriel and Son John
xxx

BALL JOHN

21st December 2015

If I had a flower, for every time I thought of you, I could walk through my garden forever.
From your loving Wife Pauline, Children, Grandchildren and Great Grandchildren
xxxx

IN MEMORIAM

McCOY BERNARD

24th October 1935 to 22nd December 2008

We would have been married 60 YEARS on the 21st December 2017

Deep are the memories and precious they stay
No passing time can take them away

Loving Wife Vera and family, Children, Grandchildren and Great Grandchildren
xxxxx

WILLIAMS DAVID ARTHUR

1 Year
22/12/17

The angels got their greatest gift
One year ago today
It broke our hearts to let you go
We wanted you to stay
Although forever in our thoughts
We'd rather have you here
But knowing that you're watching us
Has helped us through the year
Your memory will live on in us
In everything we do
No day will ever pass us by
When we don't think of you

Will always be missed
By your loving wife, children and grandchildren xxxxx

DOYLE CHRIS

24/12/2015

No longer in our lives to share,
but in our hearts you're always there.
Loving Dad
Miss you.
XXX

HALLIWELL JAMES (JIM)

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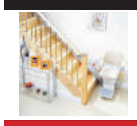

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MISC

FIRE GUARD Curved iron, hardly used £12 01772 811144

GOBLETS pair vintage leonard epns goblets silver plate 7.5" boxed £15 07790791733

COFFEE SET 10 piece cup and saucer coffee set boxed. £10 07790791733

DARTBOARD good quality one as used on tele still in box immaculate bargain £10 01515319425/07773242918

SIGNED PHOTO signed and framed photo of andrei kanchelskis at everton 22in x 18in, offers 07790791733

GIFT SET swiss line watch, wallet, belt gift set, a wonderful christmas present £15 ono 07790791733

VHS VIDEOS star trek the movies 6x video box set,star wars trilogy 3x video box set, offers 07790791733

VHS VIDEOS Dr Who the Master. Limited edition tin set colony in space/the time monster, offers 07790791733

PLATES vintage holly hobbie plates 1978 10in x3 the time to be happy is now £60.00 ono 07790791733

NEW DVDS 3 Film DVD Box Set, Steve Martin, Housesitter/Parenthood/Roxanne. New in wrapper. £3 01704 551398

IPHONE 4 white, great condition with box slight crack on back about 3 mm no effect at all bargain £40 ono 07743101819

WANTED DYSON hair dryer. New or as new with box etc cash waiting upto £130 for new cash waiting 07743101819

NINTENDO DS DS lite as new hardly used with box Professor Layton Scrabble brain training Aughton £25 01695 420950

PARTY MASK Large impressive peacock feather mask for fancy dress party or prop etc. Used once. £10 01704 560150

MOBILE PHONE Nokia Lumia 520 touch screen, crack in the screen but works fine, comes in box with charger. £20 07791168941

50P COIN Water on face £35. Shakespeare 3 commodes £60. 50p B Potter all 5. £1 coin England Belfast London Edinburgh £200 07732135011

LILLIPUT LANE Old Mother Hunnards Cottage 9cm high, great christmas present, will accept £25 ono. Can deliver 07513584289

SAMSUNG MINI-2 GT-S6500 smart phone in very good condition with charger cable. Very little use. EE network. £49. 07808484721

LIVERPOOL Bob Paisley Autographed book signed back in the 80s bargain £50 1989 fully signed football bargain £45 01515319425/07773242918

SAMSUNG S5830I Galaxy Ace 2 Smartphone, White, unlocked, good condition and full working order, box, charger £50 01704831977

COLLECTORS PLATE Royal Doulton Collectors Plate BRAMBLY HEDGE - SUMMER. Vintage 1982.New, boxed. Can e-mail pic.£12 01704 551398

SAMSUNG S7 EDGE great condition 2 covers box wire unused headphones bargain price no offers no withheld numbers £280 07743101819

MISC

LITHIUM GOLF Battery. 18 hole brand new with warranty. Bag and charger included. Ideal Christmas present. Very light. Southport. Bargain. £139. 07808484721

WEDGEWOOD Foxwood Tales bone china plate, collection clock, library regatta, jam making, mrs rabbit's kitchen, picnic, mr gruffy's shop. Perfect condition £80 07870 404914

MASSAGE MAT full body with heat customised zone control, variable massage intensity, folds up, easily stored, brand new. L 5.5ft W 15ft £35 ono 07765 202879

SIGNED PHOTOGRAPH framed and signed photo of wayne rooney at 16 yrs old,wooden frame size 20in x 16in,with certificate of authenticity. offers 07790791733

SPIDERMAN PHONE Perfect Christmas present for young lad! Fully working order, figure stands up, points, throws web etc, full Spiderman tune £30 01704 566104

COLLAGENIUS LED FACIAL MASK Light therapy face mask, red, green & blue therapy lights, for anti ageing, sun damage, acne & skin care etc. Excellent condition, great gift idea cost £299 accept £150 no offers 07504888423

MOBILITY

RECLINER CHAIR Electric, buyer collects £220 01704 570284

FOLDING WHEELCHAIR Wheel tech good condition £40 01704 222769

SELF PROPELLED wheelchair, very comfortable, quick release wheels, solid tyres, can deliver £65 Southport 214498

TRANSIT WHEELCHAIR very comfortable, folds for transport, solid tyres, seatbelt, can deliver £55 Southport 214498

3 WHEELED mobility walker with bag, lockable hand brakes for safety, can deliver £30 Southport 214498

4 WHEELED mobility walker with seat, backrest and lockable hand brakes for safety, can deliver £40 Southport 214498

WHEELCHAIR folds for easy transit, good condition, quite comfortable £40. Ormskirk 01695 579585

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MOSES BASKET with stand as new £15 07564223114

WOODEN CHANGING table as new £12 07564 223114

BABY FIREGUARD Black extendable fire guard £5.00 07870 227278

MOTHER AND BABY

SWINGING CRIB White wooden baby swinging crib in very good condition £20 01704 573121

CHICCO HIGHCHAIR Baby highchair, removable tray, good condition, slight tear near shoulder straps, not affect safety £5.00 07870 227276

BABY BOYS FOOTWEAR Primark white and blue trainers, and doggy slippers. Never worn, 9/12 months. Can send pic via e-mail. £3 01704 551398

MOTORING

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PETS

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SPORTS EQUIPMENT

GOLF CLUBS Ladies Callaway, good condition. £35 or near. Keen to sell 01704 565511

PING G2 right handed driver 10% loft bargain £35 01515319425/07773242918

SPORTS EQUIPMENT

TAYLOR MADE 6 iron New ideal for driver range bargain £10 01515319425/07773242918

HOCKEY STICK with carry case may deliver £8 ono 01515263851

JACK NICKLAUS DRIVER 10% loft EZUP hardly used right handed bargain £35 01515319425/07773242918

FOOTBALL QUOTATIONS The Book of Football Quotations. Great gift. Paperback. As new. £4 01704 551398

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POWAKADDY ELECTRIC Golf trolley. Fully refurbished in good running order with charger and brand new battery. £95 01704 212979

WONDER CORE wonder core two exercise machine,not used just out of box,assembled ready to use.£50 01695 728169-0798 550 2304.

FITNESS ROWER Horizon Oxford II, v. good condition £80. Complete gold's gym weight training equipment v. good condition £30 01704 876329

VIBRO DISC Instruction DVD included "new" vitality for life, great xmas present for yourself or someone you love. £50. Was £150 07775294968

TITLEIST GOLFCLUB Vokey design 54* wedge SM54.10 spin milled. Lamkin grip, dynamic gold shaft. In excellent condition. £20 0151 5262502

WEIGHT BENCH Pro Power bench, lat and curl. Including barbell and weights. Ideal Christmas present. Sale due to house move. £70 ONO. 07935641474

SPORTS EQUIPMENT

JUNIOR GOLF CLUBS Donnay Junior pro one golf clubs and bag age 4 to 6 -7, 9 and PW irons. age 7 to 9 - 3, 7 and 9 irons. £10 01704 560150

FOOTBALL BOOKS The Crazy World of Football, Englands Worst Footballers, Footballs Strangest Matches. As new. E-mail pic available. £5 each 01704 551398

TOYS AND GAMES

BIKESTAR SCOOTER Girls safety safety scooter AS NEW £45 07789170803

WOODEN TROLLEY CART Early learning pink wooden trolley cart with wooden blocks, looks new, cost £25, £10 01704 573121

TOY TRUCK Great condition, plastic for outside or inside play. 18 inches long, 12 inches high. Can send e-mail pic. £6 01704 551398

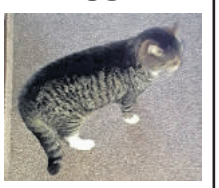
CHILD'S GUITAR As new,excellent condition, ideal present. Multi functional with 5 different types of music. Reggae, R&B, Electro etc. Suit age 4+ uses 2 batteries. Buyer collects £12. 0169557137

BRATZ FLASHBACK FEVER RETRO-RIDE VAN Used and collectors item for the future with some accessories. 24" long 11" wide 10" high grey plastic, includes in car working radio and lights. £29.00 07387439004

CHILD'S GAME TABLE Multi play free standing game table. Football, push hockey, pool,basket ball. Measurements to nearest inch,H30"L34 ",D23 ",can be dismantled for storage.Good condition. Buyer collects. £30 016955731478

LOST & FOUND

LOST



This is our 7 year old BSH tabby Millie. Missing since 8th December, Upholland area. Wearing a white collar, white underchin, white tum & white socks.

She has runny eyes due to cat flu as a baby. Timid and much loved & missed.

Please phone:

07948 607691

We want her home

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PUBLIC NOTICES

WEST LANCASHIRE BOROUGH COUNCIL
FEES FOR PRIVATE HIRE & HACKNEY CARRIAGE DRIVER, OPERATOR & VEHICLE LICENCES

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN pursuant to Section 70(3) of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 (the Act), that West Lancashire Borough Council intends to vary the maximum fees specified in Section 70(2) of the Act to be charged for the granting of private hire and hackney carriage driver, vehicle and operator licences with effect from the 1st April 2018 as follows:

	Existing (2017/18)	Proposed (2018/19)	Proposed fee comprised of (a) initial fee; and (b) successful application fee
Driver Licence Applications – Hackney Carriage, Private Hire and Dual			
Driver Licence New (3 year licence)*	£149.57	£134.92	N/A
Driver Licence Renewal (3 year licence)*	£99.06	£89.09	N/A
* Applications incur additional fees not set by the Council. These include online Disclosure and Barring Service enhanced disclosure (including validation) and medical examination.			
Vehicle Licence Applications – Hackney Carriage and Private Hire			
Hackney Carriage New (12 month licence - incl. plate)	£211.71	£193.77	(a) £77.71; (b) £116.06
Hackney Carriage Renewal (12 month licence - incl. plate)	£199.82	£183.08	(a) £66.90; (b) £116.18
Private Hire Vehicle New (12 month licence - incl. plate)	£191.90	£171.95	(a) £74.31; (b) £97.64
Private Hire Vehicle Renewal (12 month licence - incl. plate)	£181.99	£161.04	(a) £64.61; (b) £96.43
Private Hire Operator Licence Applications (5 year licence):			
1 - 10 Vehicles	£178.29	£160.36	(a) £89.08; (b) £71.28
11 - 20 Vehicles	£275.37	£248.46	(a) £92.09; (b) £156.37
21 - 30 Vehicles	£432.86	£390.51	(a) £104.53; (b) £285.98
31 - 40 Vehicles	£543.74	£493.42	(a) £106.98; (b) £386.44
41 - 50 Vehicles	£711.23	£640.47	(a) £140.92; (b) £499.55
Over 50 Vehicles	£810.29	£729.56	(a) £158.74; (b) £570.82
Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing – general			
Transfer of Vehicle Licence (change of owner)	£18.81	£15.83	N/A
Replacement Vehicle Plate	£18.81	£15.83	N/A
Replacement Driver Badge	£18.81	£15.83	N/A
Duplicate Driver Licence	£18.81	£15.83	N/A
Duplicate Vehicle Licence	£18.81	£15.83	N/A
Re-sit Knowledge Test	£18.81	£15.83	N/A

A copy of this Notice will be displayed on the Council's website as well as deposited at Council Offices located at 52 Derby Street, Ormskirk and Robert Hodge Centre, Stanley Way, Skelmersdale. The Notice will be open to public inspection without payment for a period of twenty-eight (28) days from the date of publication of this Notice. Any objections or representations in respect of the above-mentioned variation of licence fees may be made in writing to the Director of Leisure and Wellbeing within the period specified above.

Dated: 20th December 2017

Dave Tilleray, Director of Leisure and Wellbeing
West Lancashire Borough Council, Robert Hodge Centre, Stanley Way,
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www.westlancs.gov.uk

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TOWN GREEN
- Arnian Court, Belvedere Park, Bold Lane, Ledson Grove, Middlewood Close, Middlewood Drive, Middlewood Road, Molyneux Road, Sunnyside, The Grove

BURSCOUGH
- Chislett Close, Crabtree Close, Furnival Drive, Harding Road, Heaton Close, Hesketh Road, Higgins Lane, Killingbeck Close, Pickles Drive

ORMSKIRK
- Aughton Street, Brookside Res Home, Holborn Hill, Park Avenue

NEWBURGH
- Back Lane, Course Lane, New Acres, Sandy Close, Sandy Lane, Tears Lane

PARBOLD
- Brandreth Delph, Brandreth Park, Croasdale Drive, Lancaster Lane, Miry Lane, Park Close, Stoney Lane, The Delph

SCARISBRICK
- Bescar Brow Lane, Bullens Lane, Church Garage, Jacksmere Lane, Southport Road

DIGMOOR
- Bearncroft, Beechwood Court
- Bankfield, Banksbarn, Blythewood

LITTLE DIGMOOR
- Abbeystead, Abbeywood, Acregate

BIRCH GREEN
- Fairburn, Fawcett, Feltons, Inchfield, Ivybridge, Ivydale, Ivydale Nursing Home
- Inglewhite

ELMERS GREEN
- Elmers Green Lane, Foxfold, Oak Tree Court, Parklands, Sherwood Drive, The Fairways

UPHOLLAND
- College Road, Dingle Avenue, Dingle Road, Grove Road, Hallbridge Gardens, Hilldean, Stoney Brow, Woodside Close

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PUBLIC NOTICES

West Lancashire Borough Council
Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act 1990 Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 - Article 15

APPLICATION(S) FOR PLANNING PERMISSION

Application No: 2017/1289/FUL Part variation of Condition No. 20 of planning permission 2016/1251/FUL to allow the sale of Class A1 comparison goods from Unit 4 on an unrestricted basis. Removal of Condition No. 22 of planning permission 2016/1251/FUL requiring the construction of the Class B1 office building to a wind and watertight condition within 24 months of the first date of trading of the food retail unit at Ringtail Retail Park, Burscough.

APPLICATION(S) AFFECTING A CONSERVATION AREA / LISTED BUILDING

Application No: 2017/1263/FUL Demolition of existing single storey conservatory at rear and construction of single storey extension at side/rear and installation of new front entrance door and front garage door at Ashdene, Ash Brow, Newburgh.

Application No: 2017/1269/FUL Improvement of the school entrance on Southport Road (A570) by creating a new highway exit and two-lane connecting driveway to the south, together with partial demolition and rebuilding of the boundary wall and associated landscaping at Scarisbrick Hall School, Southport Road, Scarisbrick.

This does not (or may not) accord with the development plan.

Application No: 2017/1293/FUL Change of use from a church and associated buildings to a residential property at Tontine Methodist Church, Tontine, Orrell.

The applications are available for viewing on the Council's website www.westlancs.gov.uk/planning. Alternatively, the application can be viewed during normal office hours at 52 Derby Street, Ormskirk and at 1st Floor, The Concourse, Skelmersdale. If you wish to comment on the proposal you can do so via the Council's web site, by e.mail to plan.apps@westlancs.gov.uk or in writing to Development and Regeneration Services, 52 Derby Street, Ormskirk, but these must be received within 21 days of the date of this notice quoting the application no. Any comments made will be available for public inspection.

Applications for Minor Commercial and Householder Development

In the event that an appeal is made against a decision of the Council to refuse to grant planning permission for the proposed development, and that appeal then proceeds by way of the expedited procedure under the written representations procedure, any representations made to the Council about an application will be passed to the Secretary of State and there will be no opportunity to make further representations.

John R Harrison DipEnvP., MRTPI Director of Development and Regeneration — Dated: 20th December 2017 PDNOT978

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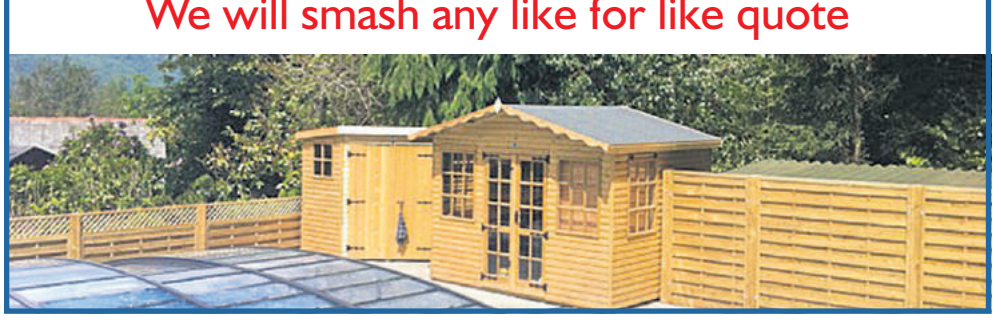

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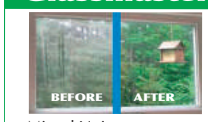

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Even the richest of Christmas recipients won't be getting a Fiat Punto this year...

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IT'S THAT time of year again. Yep, the one where you encourage an elderly bloke you've never met to wobble around on your icy rooftop in the middle of the night, having helped themselves to several glasses of sherry. What could go wrong?

Assuming our red-jacketed chum manages to do all his festive deliveries without slipping and plunging into some poor soul's back garden there's a fair chance we'll have a few presents to open on Christmas morning. I'm sure there'll be plenty of you unwrapping Star Wars merchandise and shiny smartphones, but I think I can safely predict that even the richest of festive recipients won't be getting a lovely new Fiat Punto as a present.

That's largely because – despite Fiat's efforts to jazz it up over the years – it is a 12-year-old design, meaning it comes from an era when watching *Lost* and having the Crazy Frog as your ringtone were all the rage. So you'd have to be a brave buyer to go for one over a much newer Fiesta, Corsa or Polo.

We already know that the Punto is looking a bit ancient – which is why Euro NCAP's decision to put it through a crash test it's already conducted has left the car world a bit baffled. The safety boffins have made a fairly big deal about the fact it failed to score a single star in its safety test in a world where five is the norm these days. It's a product that is well past its best-before date, at the expense of the unsuspecting car buyer. Not my words, but Euro NCAP's.

Anyone who remembers what happened when the Rover 100 picked up a dismal score will know that this might as well be the kiss of death for Italy's favourite supermini – but it's worth remembering that in 2005 the same generation of Punto picked up a five-star safety rating. So which is right, and where does it leave all of us who can't afford to drive brand new cars?

It's laudable that Euro NCAP wants to raise the bar when it comes to safety but retesting an existing model and giving it a completely different rating runs the risk of rendering all the other old results meaningless. I'm sure all of you out there driving about in Fiat Puntos – or just about any other car over about three years old – must be thrilled. Why not just set a benchmark for all cars to achieve and keep it there, so it's easy for normal people to understand how much safer cars are getting?

I'm looking forward to driving home for Christmas in my three-star Toyota Avensis. Which is either a car with decent – but not brilliant – safety, or a deathtrap so dangerous I might as well wobble around on an icy rooftop afterwards.

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Due to the festive period, the booking deadlines for advertising are as follows:

For publication **Wednesday 27th December 2017**
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Linnets denied late equaliser in nine goal thriller

Burscough 4
West Didsbury & Chorlton 5

BURSCOUGH were on the wrong end of a nine-goal thriller as fans were treated to an enthralling end-to-end game at Victoria Park, *writes Neil Leatherbarrow.*

Neither manager will have gone home entirely satisfied as both defences had a nightmare of an afternoon with a mixture of bad defending and even worse goalkeeping.

In the fourth minute Burscough went behind. A tidy build-up down the right found Tom Bailey in space some 25 yards from goal, with all the time in the world he turned and lobbed a wonderfully judged ball over Burscough goalkeeper Carl Williams and into the net.

Burscough took just two minutes to bounce back. Matt Ward drove a corner in from the right, defender Rex Kimona-Puissance got up above a crowded penalty area and planted a header firmly into the Didsbury goal to equalise.

For Didsbury, Joe Shaw fired over the crossbar, then Bailey volleyed well wide before almost inevitably Didsbury scored again on 31 minutes.

Another decent build-up again down the right saw the ball held up then eventually laid off to an on the run Ashley Woods, who swept a left-foot shot into the Burscough net from 15 yards to make it 1-2.

Burscough's Chad Whyte goes up for a header. Picture by Marc Taylor

Burscough won a corner on 33 minutes but the ball was cleared down the pitch by Didsbury and Bailey was in acres of space to collect the ball just inside his own half and set off to goal. No one got near him and he played his shot under an advancing Williams to make it 1-3.

Both goalkeepers made saves before the interval but the most bizarre incident led to the sending off of Didsbury's Woods in added time.

The away number 10 fouled Josh Dunroe and after a bout of pushing and shoving Woods got a yellow card for the foul.

Dunroe took the free-kick but Woods encroached on the free-kick giving referee Bob Roberts no choice other than to send Woods off.

In the 50th minute Whyte struck to make it 2-3. A ball from the right was weakly headed on by a Didsbury defender, the striker supplying a clinical left-foot finish on the far post.

The eccentricity of the afternoon gathered pace three minutes later. Didsbury midfielder Shaw let a speculative shot go from 35 yards it took a bounce on route to goal and went into the net to make it 2-4.

In the 56th minute Burscough pulled a goal back again. Terry Cummings played a superbly weighted ball through to Whyte who unselfishly squared the ball to Adam Gilchrist giving the half-time substitute a tap-in. On the hour there was a scramble in the Didsbury penalty area after a Ward free-kick, then Ward and Whyte combined but Gilchrist didn't finish.

Down the other end Williams saved from Omar McKenzie, before another shot from distance crept into the Burscough net on 73 minutes this time via Didsbury right-back Josh Tinker.

It was now 3-5, but there was still time for Burscough and Didsbury hadn't exactly looked impregnable at the back.

On 75 minutes Whyte headed wide off a Danny Brady cross from the left, then Brady put in an excellent through ball but away keeper Dryden frustrated Whyte with a swift interception.

With seven minutes left Gilchrist got his second with a low shot to make it 4-5.

Burscough should have levelled on 86 minutes but after a sublime weaving run through the Didsbury defence by Jordan Darr he lost his composure and contrived to hit the ball high and wide with goal at his mercy.

The ten men of Didsbury held out against the odds.

There was nothing boring about the game and if you went home unhappy with the result or any individual performances, you couldn't possibly say that you weren't entertained.

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Skem hope for winning return against fellow strugglers as they get set to kick off festive fixtures

SKELMERSDALE United will return to action this Saturday when they play fellow strugglers Brighouse Town after their last two matches have been called off due to bad weather.

They are then away at Bamber Bridge on Tuesday, December 26 before travelling to Glossop North End on Saturday, December 30.

They are at home to Prescot Cables on Tuesday, January 1.

It has been a frustrating two weeks for Skem, who have been out of action as winter weather plays havoc with the fixture list.

This Saturday's match is certainly winnable and will present the side with a good chance to return to action with three points.

Skem currently sit in 17th place in the table having earned 20 points in the 18 matches they have played so far this season.

Meanwhile,the Linnets are away at AFC Liverpool this Saturday before they host Squires Gate on Tuesday, December 26.

They travel to Bootle on Saturday, December 30.

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